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AMOUS
NCH WOMEN

RY FAWCETT, LL. D.









1870-1871

FROM THE ARCHIVE OF THE PALACE OF THE PAPES

1870-1871



FIVE FAMOUS FRENCH WOMEN

BY

Mrs. HENRY FAWCETT, LL.D.

*Author of "Life of Queen Victoria"
"Life of Sir William Molesworth"
"Political Economy for Beginners," etc. etc.*

WITH THIRTY ILLUSTRATIONS.

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FIVE FAMOUS FRENCH
WOMEN.

—
JOAN OF ARC.



JOAN OF ARC.

EVERY now and then in the history of the world a revelation is granted us of a supremely beautiful soul, one who spontaneously and without effort breathes forth nothing but what is pure, true, just, honest, brave, and lovely. With sublime originality such men and women live in the world without acquiring any of its impurities; whatever the age in which they live, their recorded speech becomes one of the most precious possessions of after time:—

Out of the low, obscure, and petty world,
Or only see one purpose and one will
Evince themselves in the world, change wrong to right:
To have to do with nothing but the true,
The good, the eternal.

At least three such pure white souls have lived in the world: each one a living miracle. Each one perished by the hand of the public executioner according to due process of law and what their contemporaries called justice. The more we know of Joan of Arc, the more surely we are convinced that she is worthy to stand with the other two, as one

of those specially inspired, God-sent messengers; and she, like the other two, after living for her fellow men, died as a common malefactor at their hands.

Such language may be condemned as characterised by fanaticism and exaggeration. But such condemnation will scarcely proceed from those who have made any minute study of the marvellous career of the Maid of Orleans. Everyone is familiar with a general outline of her brief life and cruel death; but when that outline is filled in by a study of contemporary records few will be found who do not agree that it is difficult to exaggerate or over-praise her marvellous union of capacity and modesty, heroism and simplicity.

Louis Kossuth has pointed out that this peasant girl, brought up on her father's farm at Domremy, has the unique and imposing distinction of being the only person of either sex who has ever held supreme command of the military forces of a nation at the age of seventeen.

This excites our wonder but not our veneration. Perhaps her mere fighting excites our wonder more than it ought; it must be remembered that in those days, the early fifteenth century, it was by no means uncommon for women to fight as soldiers. Michelet points out that thirty women were wounded in the siege of Amiens, and if thirty were wounded a great many more than thirty must have fought. He also

says that in the Hussite Wars in Bohemia women fought almost as commonly as men.

Neither does the distinction of the Maid of Orleans rest in her alleged supernatural visitations; she heard voices and saw visions. But the wonder would almost have been if it had been otherwise; voices and visions were not at all singular in the fifteenth century. Her unique distinction was in herself: her own character. A well-known novel turns very much on the expression, "Miracles don't happen." Joan of Arc was a living miracle; not her victories, not her voices, not her visions, but she herself, the peasant girl, the warrior saint, suddenly raised from the humblest obscurity to take command of the armies of France at a moment when France was crushed and humiliated. This peasant, transferred from her father's fields to be the equal, nay, the chief and leader, of princes and captains, but who in the process lost none of her girlish simplicity and modesty; who gave the king his crown again and placed the dethroned monarch back once more on the throne of his ancestors; who, when asked what reward she claimed for herself, could think of nothing that she could wish for except that her native village, which she had left for ever, should be exempted from taxation. This was the miracle of miracles. The age in which she lived was cruel and brutal to the point of ferocity; lust and crime stalked unchecked all

through society from the highest to the lowest. She lived among the half-savage captains of her time not only pure and virtuous herself, but a source of purity and clean living in them. We have their own word for it that when they were with her they had no thought that they might not have had for their own mother or sister, and that she appeared to them "a thing wholly divine whether to see or to hear." She ruled them through the magnetic influence of her own personality; and one secret of it was that, added to her inborn military instinct, which commanded the respect of the men-at-arms, she had absolute sincerity as well as common sense and ready wit, and was wholly womanly in the use of her tongue. Thus she had the man's weapon, the sword, as well as the woman's weapon, the tongue. To her rough soldiers she forbade the use of oaths and bad words; but to one old man, who found that when he was forbidden to swear he was reduced almost to silence, she allowed one oath, and told him he might swear by his stick.

Many instances are recorded illustrating her common sense and rustic humour. She repudiated any claim to supernatural powers. When the sick Duke of Lorraine sent for her, having heard of her fame, he thought she would cure him of his illness by some magic spell. He asked her what he should do. "Be reconciled to your wife and make your peace with God" was the somewhat disconcerting

reply of the peasant girl. Again, later in her career, when the good women of Bourges brought her crosses and rosaries, beseeching her to touch them, thinking that thus they would acquire some magic charm, she said, "Touch them yourselves; it would be all the same."

More wonderful perhaps even than her military and political achievements was the skill with which, during her trial, she parried the cross-examination conducted by some sixty of the most learned dialecticians in France, who tried in vain to entangle her in her talk; for days, weeks, and months this girl, who had then been eight months a prisoner, ill fed and loaded with chains, who, as she said, did not know A from B, kept her cruel inquisitors at bay, never once losing either her head or her temper; her modest steadfastness and high spirit confounded them. She answered so boldly and so firmly that she turned the current of popular feeling in her favour, and her persecutors were fain to conduct her examination in private because through every day of her public examination she gained ground and they lost it. An Englishman, present at the trial—and the English were of course her enemies—could not withhold the exclamation, "Brave lass! Why was she not born an Englishwoman?" All through the long weary account of the protracted trial down to her cruel death, her character shines like a bright

star out of the dark record of superstition, cruelty, and avarice that brought her at last to the stake.

The objection may be raised, "How do we know all this is true? She was a sort of prodigy, no doubt; but has not her story now become almost a fairy tale overlaid with the embroidery of legend and romance?" There is a remarkable reply to this very natural objection. Almost every incident in the career of Joan of Arc is testified to by sworn depositions made by men and women who were her companions and friends. Scores of these—some, the companions of her childhood from her native village; some, men-at-arms who were eye-witnesses of her military achievements; some, priests who cross-examined her at Poitiers, or who attended her on the scaffold; some, good women of every rank who had known her in closest intimacy; and it is from these sworn depositions, not from popular legend, that the details of her history are taken—from these and also from the notary's record of her examination by her sixty-two judges, who were really her prosecutors, at Rouen. This record of the trial, written down in Latin at the time and translated about forty years ago into French, and in 1902 into English, bears evidence that the dead parchment was once full of living actuality. The learned scribe who took down Joan's answers as she gave them has occasionally, on the margin, added his own

comment on their tenour; four times he writes on the margin, "Superba responsio," "proud reply," or again in another place, "magno modo," "grand, dignified manner."

It is rather important to bear in mind that the history of the maid was sifted in the closest way at these two trials, two legal processes—the first trial at Rouen, where she was tried by sixty-two judges, all her enemies, chosen from among the most learned lawyers and ecclesiastics from the university of Paris, was hardly what we should call a trial at all; she was allowed no counsel and no witnesses were called; her so-called judges were really her prosecutors, and were fully determined on her death before the trial opened at all. The object of the long cross-examination was to wrest from her some admission that could be twisted into proof of demoniac possession, which would discredit the crowning of Charles VII. at Rheims, the chief political accomplishment of Joan's life. If the court at Rouen could prove that Joan was a sorceress, the sanctity of Charles's coronation would be destroyed and discredited. It was to this end that the prolonged examination was aimed; and in the accomplishment of this end it signally failed. The second trial had likewise a political end in view. Charles VII. became King of France, as Joan had foretold he should, and the English were driven out of nearly all their French possessions;

but the crowning of Charles at Rheims in 1429 had been brought about by Joan, and she had been condemned and burnt as a sorceress. The pride of the King of France could not brook that it should be said that he owed his crown to a sorceress; therefore, although the wretched creature had lifted no finger to help her, and had offered no penny to ransom her, while she was living, and in the hands of his and her mortal enemies, twenty-five years after her ashes had been scattered in the Seine he instituted another trial, which was called a process of rehabilitation. It was then that the companions of her childhood were called to give their evidence, as well as the captains who had fought by her side, the women who had lived with her, and the priests who had heard her in confession, and who had administered the rites of religion to her.

It is no credit to Charles that this inquiry was instituted; his only motive was that it might not be said that he owed his kingdom to the incantations of a witch; but none the less the depositions of the witnesses are of supreme importance as a revelation of Joan's true character, and are of immense interest in themselves; they bear the impress of truth in every page; the evidence of the various witnesses differs one from the other just as an account of the same event from different persons always differs; but Joan's character shines through all of them, pure, white, and spotless, "the





THE COTTAGE AT DOMREMY WHERE JOAN OF ARC WAS BORN.

From a Photograph by Nourdin Frézet, Paris.

one pure figure which rises out of the greed, the lust, the selfishness, the unbelief of the time."

An attempt must now be made to tell her story in a methodical manner. She was born on January 5, 1412, at Domremy, a frontier village between France and Lorraine, on the direct road to Germany; she was one of the children of a peasant proprietor, Jacques d'Arc, who appears to have been the chief man of his village. At the time of her childhood, half France was in the hands of the English; the other half was desolated by civil war. Burgundy allied itself with the English, so that France was divided against itself, and Frenchmen sided with the enemies of France. Domremy being on the border between France and Lorraine, and being also not far removed from Burgundy, was often the scene of war, and still oftener of rumours of war. Once in the dead waste and middle of the night the village was attacked by the Burgundians, and Joan and her little brothers and sisters were roused out of their beds to be carried by their parents to a place of greater safety. Another time a party of fugitives flying from armed men arrived in the village, and Joan gave up her own bed to some of them and went herself to sleep in an attic. What events to stimulate the fancy of an imaginative child! And if these were not enough there were other things to feed the flame of thoughts beyond the reaches of her soul. There was the

forest with its haunted glades, an oak tree whose branches had often served as a gibbet, and had the awful association connected with its direful fruit of human corpses; and there was legend as well, and the romantic popular saying "That France had been ruined by a woman, and was destined to be saved by a virgin from the borders of Lorraine."

Joan brooded over these things; a quiet, good child, obedient to her parents, attentive to religion, loving to hear the church bells ring and to take part in the services of the church. She had nothing that is ordinarily called education. She could neither read nor write; but she could feel and pray. She felt for the unutterable calamities of France, and she prayed God to send a deliverer. She knew that more than once God's people had been saved by a woman, a Judith, a Deborah, and she remembered that there was a prophecy, which was also a promise, that a woman should bruise the serpent's head. Tending her father's sheep, or sitting perhaps outside her mother's door spinning in the sun, she mused over all these things. The Psalmist says, "While I was musing the fire kindled, then spake I with my tongue." But while Joan was musing the fire kindled indeed, but she did not speak; she was spoken to. She was sitting in the open air in the middle of the day in summer, and she saw a bright light, brighter even than the midday summer sun, and heard a voice which spoke to her by name:

"Joan, be a good child. Go often to church." Harmless words enough, but we are told they frightened her; she felt her destiny was coming. She was thirteen at the time, on the borderland where womanhood and childhood meet. The next time the voices spoke to her, she saw the light again, and she also saw the form of a noble-looking man; the voice said, "Go to the help of the King of France, and thou shalt restore to him his kingdom." She replied trembling, "Sir, I am but a poor child. I know not how to ride to the wars or to lead men-at-arms." The voice gave her directions what she was to do. She was to go to the nearest town, Vaucouleurs, and ask to see the captain there, one Baudricourt by name, and he would tell her how to approach the king. These messages were repeated again and again during the years while Joan was between thirteen and seventeen; till at last she felt she could choose no longer; she must obey, and go to find the king. It is not difficult to imagine what happened in her home—her mother's tears, her father's fury; these were not times when rebellious daughters could expect any gentleness. If we remember Capulet's language to Juliet when she refuses to marry the County Paris, we probably only have a faint perception of Jacques d'Arc's to his daughter. She said afterwards of the struggle with her parents that it was the worst battle she ever fought, worse than any in which

she bore arms against the English. Her father threatened to drown her; still she persisted; appeals were made to her filial piety; she said she must obey God rather than her parents. Asked what prompted her, she could only reply that it was "the pity she had for the fair realm of France."

At last she gained one supporter: let his name be remembered and honoured. Her uncle by marriage, Durant Laxart, was the first to believe in her mission. He lived near Vaucouleurs, and could at least help her to go there. He took her to stay with himself and his wife, and then went by himself to Vaucouleurs to see the captain of the men-at-arms there, Baudricourt. Here also it was the expected that happened. On hearing Laxart's story that his niece, a girl of seventeen, proposed to save France from the English, and wanted a company of armed men to lead her to the king, Baudricourt burst into a loud laugh and said, "Box her ears and send her back to her father." In point of fact she was sent back to her father. Her family then tried to settle matters by providing her with a husband. They produced a young man who said Joan had given him her promise; but she was not a girl tamely to submit to an imposture. She now exerted herself with vigour; she appealed to the ecclesiastical court at Toul, and proved to the satisfaction of the bishop there that she had given no promise to marry the young man.

Her case now began to excite some local interest; one of her brothers took her part, and she went again to her uncle, Durant Laxart; a good many people were inclined to believe in her. She appeared before Baudricourt; his disbelief had lost some of its former robust vigour. She said she had been sent to him by the Lord, in order to tell the Dauphin to be of good courage, that succour should come to him before mid-Lent; that the Lord was the King of France, and that His will was that she, Joan, should lead the Dauphin to be crowned and reign over France. Baudricourt was perplexed and doubtful. He sent a messenger all across France to ask instructions of the king; and he summoned the curé, who suggested the influence of evil spirits; he was despatched to the house where Joan was lodging, and sprinkling her with holy water, he adjured her to go away if she had had any commerce with the evil one. She was steadfast and persistent. "Before mid-Lent," she repeated in Baudricourt's presence, "I *must* go to the king, though I wore out my legs to the knees. No one in the world, neither king, nor dukes, nor the daughter of the King of Scotland, can restore the kingdom of France but myself only; though I should be far happier to stay and spin by my mother's side; but I *must* go and I *must* act; my Lord wills it." "And who is your Lord?" She replied, "He is God."

A gentleman who heard her put his hand in hers, and promised, on his honour, he would lead her to the king. This was Jean de Metz, another name that deserves to be remembered. "When shall I take you to the king?" he asked. Her reply is characteristic, "Better to-day than to-morrow." Baudricourt, in the meantime, had received permission from the king that Joan should set out, and two men arrived from Charles to be her escort. These two, with Jean de Metz and his friend Poulengy, formed her whole party, and the wonderful journey across France from east to west began. Jean de Metz gave her a suit of armour; the town-folk of Vaucouleurs gave her a horse; Baudricourt gave her a sword. She was eleven days on the journey. There were no roads and few bridges, and the country swarmed with robbers. The safe arrival of the maid with her little band at the king's castle at Chinon was almost a miracle. As she started from Vaucouleurs someone in the crowd called out to ask her if she were not afraid. Her reply was, "I was born for this." These words were constantly on her lips, reminding us of Another who had spoken similar words before her. The two ends for which she felt she was born were the raising of the siege of Orleans, then for many months sorely beset by the English, and the crowning of Charles at Rheims.

It needs an effort of the imagination on our part

to realise the great importance attached by all France to the coronation and consecration of the monarch. To the French their king was no king until he had been anointed with the sacred oil, and had received the crown with imposing religious ceremonial. And in the case of Charles VII., not only had he never been crowned, but there were strong doubts of his legitimacy; his own mother had put her hand to a document in which he had been spoken of as the "so-called Dauphin," and his rights to succeed to the throne had been set aside in a treaty signed by his mother and his reputed father at Troyes.

At the moment of Joan's arrival Charles's political fortunes were at their lowest ebb. His capital, Paris, was held by the English, and was wholly English in sympathy. The whole of Normandy was also held by the English, who claimed that their king, the child Henry VI., was the rightful King of France. Added to all these external sources of weakness there were still more serious internal ones; chief of which was that Charles VII.* was a poor creature, more intent on amusing himself in the castles which he still held on the Loire than on regaining his kingdom or driving out the invader.

To this King of shreds and patches, incapable of looking at serious things seriously, incapable of any sustained effort to take up the tasks and duties

* Charles was the Dauphin depicted in Shakespeare's "Henry V."

of his station, and with no real faith in himself, came Joan, the maid, the simple peasant girl, proclaiming that she was sent by her brothers in heaven to make him a King indeed and drive the invaders out of France.

The scene of her reception by Charles at the castle of Chinon is well known. She was kept waiting two days before she was admitted to the audience chamber. When at last the time came for the King to receive her, it was night, and the great hall was illuminated by the flaring light of fifty torches. Three hundred gorgeously dressed nobles were present with a great retinue. It seems to have been desired to dazzle the girl with all this splendour; or perhaps the crowd was brought together by a natural curiosity to see the supposed sorceress or prophetess. We are not told much of the mutual impression produced, but the astonishment cannot have been all on one side; the sorceress was a beautiful girl of seventeen, tall and well formed, with a mellow, penetrating, womanly voice. Charles had sought to conceal his own identity by mingling with the crowd of nobles, but she went straight to him and threw herself on her knees at his feet saying, "Gentle Dauphin, God give you good life." "Rise," he said; "it is not I who am the King." "Gentle Prince," she insisted, "it is you and no other. I am Joan the Maid. The King of Heaven commands you,



RUINS OF THE CASTLE, CHINON.

From a Photograph by November Friess, Paris.



through me, to be crowned and consecrated at Rheims." The laughter of the courtiers was silenced, the mocking smile on the lips of the King faded, and he led her aside, where for a few moments they spoke to one another apart. What was said between them is not known. Joan at her trial refused to answer all questions on what she felt was the King's secret more than her own; but the inference is, and there is strong evidence in its support, that Joan answered the King's secret gnawing doubt of his own legitimacy, and that her first private words to him were, "You *are* the true heir of France, the son of the King." From this moment Charles believed in her, and she also had on her side the Duc d'Alençon, and the King's wife, and her mother the Queen of Sicily. It will be a satisfaction to most women that all through Joan's brief two years of activity she always and everywhere won the women to her side. From queens and princesses to peasant children she won them, and they saw her as she was—a true woman, seeking not her own, but just to do the work she felt she had been sent to do. The Church, on the other hand, was mostly either neutral or hostile to her. It did not relish divine inspiration which had come through other channels than those which it had provided. Michelet has an amusing passage about the facility with which the learned doctors and theologians believed in bad spirits,

compared with the difficulty they felt in giving credence to the inspiration of good spirits. They could not bring themselves to believe in angels; but their faith in devils was as firm as a rock.

Before despatching the maid on her mission to Orleans, Charles sent her to be cross-examined by the theologians of the University of Poitiers. She held her own with them, with the common-sense and mother wit which always distinguished her. They wanted her to give them some miraculous sign of her divine commission. She replied, "I have not come to Poitiers to give signs or to work miracles. My sign will be to raise the siege of Orleans. Let them give me men-at-arms, few or many, and I will go." One wiseacre said that if God had determined to deliver France there was no need for men-at-arms. "Ah," she cried, "the men must fight; it is God who gives the victory." They asked her a great many questions about the language in which her voices had spoken to her; she said it was French. "What sort of French?" asked a monk from Limoges with a very strong Limousin accent. "Better than yours," she rejoined. And when the learned professors turned for assistance to their books of theology, she said, "Listen! There is more in God's book than in yours. I do not know A from B, but I am sent from God to raise the siege of Orleans and to lead the Dauphin to be consecrated at Rheims." The

court of inquiry began to believe in her. Orleans was crying out for help, and no other help seemed near. Even lawyers and men of the world began to say, "This child is sent from God." The doctors of the university reported in her favour. An archbishop who was consulted said that God had many times revealed to virgins what he had hidden from men, and he quoted the example of the Sybils. Moreover, the devil was held to be incapable of making a compact with a virgin. Thus even superstition for a time was favourable to her, and she was equipped and sent forth.

It is necessary to say a few words about her adoption of a man's dress. She wore a man's suit of armour, and not even the entreaties of the good Queens, nor that of the women at Poitiers, could induce her to give it up. To ordinary inquirers she replied, what was obvious enough, that it was the only dress to ride and fight in; but at times she gave the more important reason that the armour was a real protection to her which she would never willingly relinquish as long as she had to live without the companionship of women in the midst of a wild and lawless soldiery. It seems that she must have satisfied the Queen of Sicily that it was right for her to wear a male dress, because the Queen presented her with a beautiful suit of white armour inlaid with silver. The two Queens, after close personal observation, were firmly con-

vinced of her innocence and purity. Another of the court party favourable to her was the Duke of Alençon: "le beau duc," Joan often called him. He seems to have been a handsome fellow and a brave soldier. He now joined the company of armed men who were to accompany Joan to Orleans—rather to his wife's dismay, for he had lately been a prisoner in England; she had ransomed him regardless of expense, and it was rather hard on her that this expensively purchased husband should risk himself again at once against the English, and with a no stronger party than that which Joan gathered about her. Joan promised the Duchess to bring her husband back in safety to her, and she was as good as her word. This duke is one of many soldiers who testified to Joan's inborn military genius; he spoke particularly of her skill in managing artillery, and said she was a "gunner born."

The court gave Joan a sort of "household," of which her brother Pierre was a member. A chaplain and an equerry were chosen for her from among the best men at court. Her sword was brought from Fierbois, where it was found by searching according to her directions in the ground behind the high altar in the Church of St. Catherine; the King gave her a scabbard of crimson velvet worked in gold. Her standard was of white linen fringed with silk and embroidered with a

figure of the Saviour and the names "Jesus" and "Mary" at the foot. She afterwards said at her trial that she loved her standard forty times better than her sword; and, indeed, she declared when she set out, "I will never use my sword to kill any man." This feminine trait may provoke a smile—a soldier unwilling to kill; but after all the duty of a leader is to lead, and it is said of one of the greatest commanders of our own time and nation that he never carried any weapon but a cane. One of her followers, the young knight Guy de Laval, wrote a description of her to his mother and grandmother. It is this letter that said of her that she was a thing wholly divine, whether to see or to hear. To see her completely armed, with the exception of her head, in her suit of white armour, mounted on a great black horse, her radiant young face shining with enthusiasm, her standard fluttering by her side, to hear her womanly voice giving the word to advance, and bidding the priests to offer prayers for her success, these things awakened the enthusiasm of the young knight to the highest pitch, and he poured himself out in the letter to his mother, still extant, from which I have quoted. He desired his mother, who had charge of his seal, to spare not his lands, neither in sale nor mortgage, so that he might render help to the utmost extent of his power to the necessities of his country.

But it must not be supposed that all the knights

and squires gave her an equally generous recognition. There had been a strong party against her from the first, both in the court and in the camp, and at every step of her way she had to fight against intrigue and treachery. One knight exclaimed furiously that he would not serve under such a leader. "What," he cried, "is the advice of a hussy from the fields to be taken before that of a knight or captain! I will fold up my banner and become again a simple soldier; I would rather have a nobleman for my master than a woman whom nobody knows." And there were always a number of men on her own side who felt like this, and who cheated and thwarted her whenever they were able. It was very much the same sort of thing that one sees now; the really great men were magnanimous, and welcomed her; but the little men, who were not quite sure perhaps of their own powers, or assured of maintaining their own position, were jealous and envious.

I shall not attempt to describe Joan's achievement in raising the siege of Orleans from the military point of view, for the excellent reason that I know nothing of military tactics. It must suffice me to say that Joan found Orleans weakened by disunion among its defenders; the citizens had fought bravely and had made great sacrifices; but unity of action was needed, and the commander, Dunois, brave soldier as he was, was not able to

create it. Joan entered Orleans on April 29th, 1429. The city received her as if they had seen God descending among them. The crowd thronged round her, contented if they might but touch her horse. Joan gave them the unity of purpose and faith in their cause which they so much needed; her coming also spread dismay among the English. One of these, Glasdale, loaded her with vile epithets. His insults wounded her bitterly, and she could not restrain her tears. A day or two later, in the midst of the great fight in which the English were finally defeated, she saw this man die. "Classidas, Classidas," she cried, "you have called me vile names, but I have great pity for your soul." "Great pity" was never very far from her, and she could feel it for an enemy as well as for an ally. On one occasion she saw a French soldier ill-using a wounded and dying Englishman. Her indignation was intense. She leapt from her horse, rescued the unhappy man, supported his head in her arms, sent for a priest, and made the soldier's dying hours as tranquil at least as gentleness and mercy could make them.

But with all her gentleness she could be strong as steel. She insisted on her own plan of carrying on the attack upon the English, and told Dunois that if he attempted any attack without her knowledge she would have his head cut off. After a slight advantage, the captains wanted to desist

from following it up, and held their council of war without her. "You have held your council," she said, "and I have had mine." And she ordered the renewal of the attack at break of day. The result was a victory. Everywhere her standard was seen foremost in the fight. She was wounded; an arrow pierced her breast and stood out a hand-breadth behind her shoulder. She cried from the pain, but plucked the arrow out with her own hands; would not hear of having the wound charmed. She staunched it with an oil compress, and though at first she thought she was going to die, and made her confession to her chaplain, she soon scrambled on her horse again and led the fight once more—this time to complete victory. The English were routed, and Orleans was saved. After a siege of seven months Joan of Arc saved the town in eight days, and justly does her name live in history as that of the Maid of Orleans.

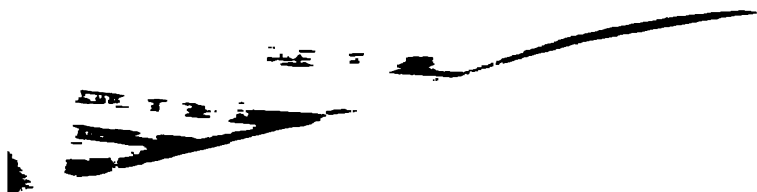
One incident of the fight must not be forgotten. We have the right to hope it is true, though there is some conflict of evidence about it. When the arrow struck Joan in the breast and she fell, the man nearest to her was the captain who was so indignant that "a hussy from the fields" should be preferred to knights and captains. He raised her from the ground and cleared space for her in the crowd. "Take my horse," he said, "brave creature. Bear no malice. I confess that I was in the

wrong." "It is I that should be wrong if I bore malice," replied Joan, "for never was knight so courteous."

The evidence as to Joan's military instinct and her marvellous courage in leading the charge after so serious a wound is of undoubted authenticity. The Duke of Alençon, who was present, stated that "she was most expert in war both with the lance and in massing an army, and arraying battle, and in the management of artillery. For all men marvelled how far-sighted and prudent she was in war, as if she had been a captain of thirty years' standing."

After the great victory at Orleans, the right thing, both from the military and political point of view, would have been to press on at once without delay to Rheims for the coronation of the King; but Joan was the only one among the crowd of soldiers and politicians to urge this sensible advice. Charles was indolent and indifferent, and the ministers and captains about him each seemed to have his own private end in view, whereas Joan thought only of the cause to which her life was devoted. Orleans was delivered on May 8th, and it was not till more than two months after this, July 15th, that Charles entered Rheims to be crowned. In these two months, between Orleans and Rheims, there was what may be described as a "fine deal of confused fighting." Auxerre, a Burgundian stronghold, was

passed, sorely against Joan's wishes, without attacking it; but Troyes, where the treaty disinheriting Charles had been signed, was attacked and taken. When they came near Châlons, and Joan was approaching her own part of the country, a party of peasants from Domremy came out to meet her. They asked her if she were not afraid. She replied, "I fear nothing but treason." And through these tedious two months Joan was constantly urging a bold advance, and the King's council was as constantly preventing it. She described what she felt during this conflict. She said, "When I am vexed, and find myself disbelieved in the things I say from God, I retire by myself and pray to God. . . . And when I have prayed I hear a voice which says, 'Daughter of God, go, go, go. I will help thee; go!' And when I hear that voice I feel a great joy." Her face shone as she spoke. The maid was very conscious that she was surrounded by enemies and traitors within her own party. Even after the great victory at Orleans and other smaller triumphs in which she had shown personal courage and military capacity of the highest order, all that the Church in its official capacity had to say of her was, "Give God the praise, but we know that this woman is a sinner." And all this was because Joan, though a devout Catholic, sought inspiration and guidance elsewhere than through the channels laid





RHEIMS CATHEDRAL

From a Photograph by Nourdin Frères Paris.

down by the Church. It was the old story: the priests are mostly against the prophets. It must not, however, be forgotten that there were some Churchmen who regarded her in a more generous spirit. Gerson, one of the most famous theologians of his time, to whom some authorities ascribe the famous treatise on the "Imitation of Christ," recognised Joan's true self-devotion and nobility of aim. He is reported to have said of her: "If France desert her and she fail, she is none the less inspired." This Gerson devoted his learning to the education of youth, and would accept no fee from his scholars, only taking a promise from them to repeat daily the prayer, "Lord have mercy on thy poor servant Gerson." It is a satisfaction in the dark and gloomy records of the time to come across this beautiful nature, and to learn that he recognised in Joan a kindred spirit.

Charles VII. entered Rheims on July 15th, 1429, and was crowned in the cathedral with all the gorgeous traditional ceremonial on the 17th. The Archbishop of Rheims, no less than the King, had up to this time been shut out of his cathedral city. They both entered it now in the train of the maid. Thus, in less than five months from her first setting forth from Vaucouleurs she had accomplished her mission—she had relieved Orleans, driven the English back to their strongholds in Normandy, and had set the royal crown of France on the head

of the King. Thus far her progress had been a series of victories. Her unparalleled triumphs had not spoiled her; she remained all through them in her simplicity sublime. The adoration of the crowd, the society of the great, the jealousy of courtiers, the intrigues of politicians, were alike powerless to deteriorate her. She had within her the pure fire of self-devotion to a noble cause which enabled her to keep herself unspotted from the world. Her triumphs had not corrupted her; but henceforth, after the crowning of the King, she was destined to be tried by the fires of adversity. At Rheims she experienced the highest culmination of her hopes. Her mission was accomplished, and she had besides the private and personal joy of meeting her father once more and being reconciled to him. He who had loaded her with curses and threats now came to Rheims to fold her in his arms and to forgive her for being great. But she seems to have had a presentiment of her approaching end, though not the manner of it. Above any place she had ever seen she loved Rheims, and expressed a wish that she might be buried there. The archbishop tried to draw from her a prophecy as to the time and place of her death; but she answered simply that of this she knew nothing, only that it would be when and where it pleased God. "I would that it might please Him," she added, "to let me go away and keep sheep with my sister and





JOHN, DUKE OF BEDFORD, REGENT OF FRANCE.

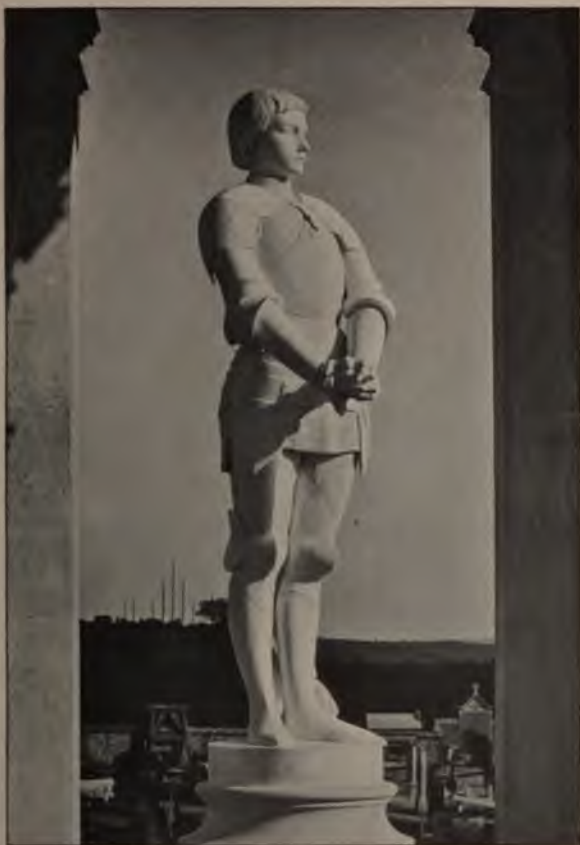
FROM AN ENGRAVING BY GEORGE VERTUE, AFTER A
DRAWING IN A RICHLY ILLUMINATED PRAYER-BOOK
PRESENTED BY THE REGENT TO HENRY VI.

my brothers. . . . They would be so glad to see me again. . . . I have accomplished what our Lord commanded me to do." As she said this she lifted her eyes to heaven, and the people round her, says the old chronicle, saw her face as if it had been the face of an angel.

Her advice and strong wish now was to strike a blow at once for Paris. The English were discouraged, and were, besides, in the greatest straits for money. "Chill penury repressed their noble rage." The Parliament assembled in Paris had to be dismissed because there were no funds to meet necessary expenses. The young King, Henry VI., had been brought to Paris, but there was no royal proclamation of the event because of the *lack of parchment*. The registrars, or keepers of the records, had for some time provided parchment at their own expense, but now they struck, and would do so no more. The low-water mark of national finance was never more picturesquely indicated. The Regent Bedford, brother of Henry V., had but one resource—to apply for help to his rich uncle, Henry Beaufort, Cardinal and Bishop of Winchester, one of the illegitimate sons of John of Gaunt. The help applied for was given, but not without an equivalent. Cardinal Beaufort was not a man to give anything for nothing; if he consented to finance the English occupation of France it was under the condition that he con-

trolled it. Henceforth, therefore, the English policy in France was less military than ecclesiastical. This was a point that told very strongly against Joan. When she was taken she was not treated as a prisoner of war, or as a general fighting at the head of her troops, but as a heretic to be handed over to the tender mercies of an ecclesiastical court. Joan herself, after the crowning of Charles at Rheims, felt that her enemies were closing in about her. She said more than once that her King must make all the good use of her he could, for that she would not last for more than a year.

It was just ten months from the day, July 25th, 1429, when she rode out triumphant from Rheims, to May 23rd, 1430, when she was taken prisoner. In these ten months that were left her she did much. Many cities submitted at once to Charles, and the French army pressed on towards Paris. Meanwhile Charles made a secret treaty with the Duke of Burgundy which effectually crippled the progress of his army without securing any compensating advantage. Thus the French troops were led by Joan to the very walls of Paris, and a great fight took place outside the St. Honoré Gate (where the equestrian statue of the maid now stands, near the Théâtre Français), in which Joan, though desperately wounded, secured a decided advantage. The next day, in spite of her



JOAN OF ARC.

FROM THE STATUE BY BARRAS, AT BONSECOURS.

From a Photograph by Neurdein Frères, Paris.



wound, she was first in the field, and was making all preparations for a renewal of the attack, when orders came from the King for the withdrawal of the army. To make assurance doubly sure, this wretched King had the bridge broken down, which the Duke of Alençon had made, and by which the Maid with her forces would have approached Paris for a renewal of the fight. This was an almost heartbreaking blow to Joan. We are told by the chronicler that she was in great grief. She took off her armour and laid it on the altar in the church at St. Denis. This armour was afterwards brought to England, but there is no record of what became of it there. The ecclesiastical spirit of Joan's enemies from this date is shown by the fact that they made a special attack upon her because she had ordered the assault on Paris to take place on September 8th, the day of the nativity of the Virgin. The soldiers' comment would have been, "The better the day the better the deed"; but to one party at any rate in the Church this "creature in the form of a woman" proved her demoniac possession most surely by undertaking feats of arms on a day specially set aside by the Church for other uses.

Joan was right when she told her peasant friends that what she most feared was treachery. She might have prevailed against an open foe, but her worst enemies were of her own party. She

will keep my oath." She was dragged from her horse. She neither struggled nor wept. She knew that her hour had come. Gladly would we forget, if we could, what followed. It was the age of chivalry, when every noble knight dedicated his sword to the defence of maidens in distress. But chivalry too often seems to be one of those tiresome things that has a way of not being there when it is wanted. There is plenty of it where it is superfluous, but it too often fails to be on the spot when the need is greatest. No reasonable person can complain that her enemies triumphed over her capture. She had become a soldier, and was bound to take the fortunes of war as they came. But the King to whom she had given his crown, the nobles and captains by whose side she had fought, made no effort to rescue or to ransom her; Compiègne made no sally for her recovery; from one end of France to the other no finger was raised to help her.

In the early morning of the day in which she was taken she had attended church in Compiègne. As she stood leaning against a pillar, a great many children had gathered round her, and a longing for sympathy moved her to speak to them. "Dear friends and children," she said, "I have to tell you that a man has sold and betrayed me, and I shall soon be given up to death. I beg of you to pray for me, for soon I shall no longer have any power to serve the King and

the fair realm of France." Now the impending catastrophe had come upon her. She was in the hands of her enemies, and was forsaken and neglected by her friends. The Archbishop of Rheims, to whom she had restored his cathedral city, wrote a letter in which he proved to his own entire satisfaction that the capture of Joan was wholly her own fault. The only thing that was done for her was that in the cities of Orleans, Tours, and Blois public prayers were offered for her. They should have remembered what Joan had taught them when she said, "Men must fight, and God will give the victory." So much for her friends. As for her enemies and their treatment of her in her captivity, the English and French must share the responsibility; and of this the heaviest portion falls upon the Church and Churchmen. The University of Paris, within a day of the news of her capture, claimed her as its lawful prey. But she was a valuable asset, and her possessors did not lightly relinquish her. She was passed from castle to castle and from prison to prison. At first she was not ill-used, receiving honourable treatment as a prisoner of war. Noble ladies, relatives of her captors, visited her, and, like all the rest of the women, became conscious of her goodness and purity. She never consented to give any promise not to attempt to escape, and at Beaurevoir she flung herself off the battlements, a height of sixty feet, and was nearly

killed. Till December, 1430, she was in the hands of the Burgundians; then the English bought her, and conveyed her in January to Rouen. This is where the worst part of our shame comes in. Not that we bought her; it was worse, perhaps, to sell than to buy such merchandise; but her outrageous treatment in prison is a blot which not even centuries can wholly wipe out. She was confined in a wretched dungeon—some authorities say in an iron cage—she was watched incessantly night and day by English soldiers who were in her room, five by day and three by night. She was chained, and she was never allowed one moment in privacy. The bare fact speaks for itself. The English, moreover, handed her over to the ecclesiastical court with the Bishop of Beauvais at its head. This court consisted of the most eminent French ecclesiastics and university professors of the time; there were only two Englishmen among them. From January to May they behaved to the unfortunate girl in their power with indescribable ferocity and cruelty. I have already spoken of the extraordinary skill she displayed in mere word fence with them; how she avoided the traps they set for her and held firmly to her conviction that her voices were sent from God. She told them from the first that there were certain things she would never answer. About herself and her own conduct she would tell everything; but she would never betray secrets which pertained



JOAN OF ARC'S TOWER, ROUEN.
From a Photograph by Narcobita Frères, Paris.



to the King and the kingdom: if they forced her to speak on these, she frankly said she would not tell the truth.

For hours together they questioned and cross-questioned her about her wearing a man's dress. The least grain of common sense would have made it obvious why she wore it—alone in prison with ruffianly men. She said if they would let her be with women she would wear a woman's dress. When cross-examination in public began to turn public feeling in her favour, the public trial was discontinued, and she was cross-examined in her cell by a selected band of her judges in private. Her steadfastness was just as unshaken as it had been in the public court. Her voices told her to answer boldly. Then her judges conducted her to the torture chamber and tried to intimidate her by the sight of all the instruments of torture; they voted on the question whether she should be tortured or not; but even these men had some humanity, for of the thirteen only three voted for torture. Threatened with the stake, she replied, "I can say nothing else to you; if I saw the fire before me I should only say what I have said, and could do nothing else." This is one of the answers against which the notary has entered on the margin, "proud reply." Attempts were made to sully her reputation, but without avail. In reply to questions she said she was sure of being saved and not damned,

and that she believed this as firmly as if she were in Paradise already. When it was said to her that this answer was of great weight, she replied that she herself held it as a great treasure. She was repeatedly asked if she would submit to the Church, and replied, "Yes, Our Lord being served first." In one of her answers she referred to the Pope, and was immediately asked which she held to be the true Pope? She answered, "Are there two?"

Two or three men in Rouen befriended her, one Lohier, a lawyer, who protested that her trial was not legal. He also made the suggestion to her that if she replied, "It seems to me," instead of "I know for certain," no man could condemn her. His protests as to the illegality of the trial, in which all the usual forms for the protection of the accused had been disregarded, were made direct to the Bishop of Beauvais himself, and might very probably have had important practical results in Joan's favour, if Lohier's courage had had more staying power; but having made his protest and delivered his conscience, he fled to Rome to secure his own safety; the Pope immediately gave him an important legal appointment, and he ended his days as Dean of the Rota. Manchon, the notary, dared something for Joan. Her judges introduced a sham priest, a false confessor, into her cell, hoping she would reveal to him what she had concealed from them. Manchon declined to act as notary on this occasion, or to



FIFTEENTH CENTURY HOUSE IN RUE SAINT
ROMAIN, ROUEN, WHERE JOAN OF ARC IS
SAID TO HAVE BEEN LODGED

From a Photograph by Nourdin Frérot, Paris.



have anything to do with this piece of treachery. Massieu, the usher of the court, showed some gentleness to her, but her best friend of all, one who remained with her to the last, was a priest, Brother Isambard. He placed himself near her at the trial, and made suggestions likely to help her. It must be remembered she was allowed no lawyer to conduct her case for her. Isambard advised her to appeal to the council then sitting at Bâle. She had to ask, "What is this council at Bâle?" and he explained that it represented the whole Catholic Church. So that when Joan was next asked if she would submit to the Church, she replied she would willingly submit to the council of Bâle. The Bishop of Beauvais, the president of the court, was in a fury, and called out, "*Silence, in the devil's name.*" He then ordered the notary not to put down what Joan had said. Joan cried, "You write what is against me, but you will not write what is for me." Isambard placed himself in great peril by the friendship he showed her. The English threatened to throw him into the Seine. But a member of the court, one Lemaitre, fiercely warned the authorities he would have no harm come to this good priest.

The Bishop of Beauvais, president of the court and Joan's most inveterate enemy among her judges, was a creature of Cardinal Beaufort's. Beaufort had recommended him to the Pope to be

Archbishop of Rouen; but Rouen had refused to ratify the nomination, and the appointment remained in suspense. This gives the key to the bishop's eagerness to be the submissive slave of Cardinal Beaufort, and to please that party in the Church which condemned Joan as a sorceress. It was the bishop who negotiated the sale of Joan from Jean de Ligny, her first captor, for 10,000 francs; he was in constant communication with Warwick, then in command of the English forces at Rouen. But he seems so far to have misunderstood the English point of view as to have thought that all they wanted was Joan's death; so in his eagerness to oblige he sent her a dish of poisoned fish on Easter Sunday. She nearly died, but her robust constitution and the prompt measures ordered by Warwick for her recovery pulled her through. Warwick was extremely angry and said, "The King" (meaning, of course, his king, Henry VI., a little boy of nine years old) "would not for the world have her die a natural death. The King had bought her, and she had cost him dear." He was determined to have his money's worth. This was, that she might be publicly declared a witch and perish at the stake. It was only in this way that the crowning of Charles at Rheims could be discredited, and the crowning of the young king, Henry, in Paris, which had taken place the previous December, could pass current as

a valid ceremonial. They required a retraction from Joan which would reduce the first coronation to a pantomime and raise the second to the pinnacle of highest national significance.

Throughout the year of Joan's imprisonment this was the darkest time. She began to be tortured by secret doubts. Had her voices deceived her? Her strength for a time seems to forsake her. She was weakened, no doubt, by her long imprisonment, by the constant strain of her cross-examination, and by the vigilance ceaselessly required for the protection of her honour. The poisoning, which just fell short of killing her, had doubtless its share in the physical and spiritual depression to which, for a time, she succumbed. She was taken by her prosecutors to the market place at Rouen, and there set up on a platform with a near view of the stake all surrounded by faggots made ready for a victim. With this terrific object lesson in front of her, she was preached at, cross-examined, and questioned again. A paper was put into her hand, and she was told she had only to make her mark to save herself from the flames. The people in the crowd called out, "Joan, why will you die? Will you not save yourself?" Once she called out, "All I did was done for good, and it was well to do it." But at last she made a round O on one end of the paper which had been given to her. She was told that would not do; she must make a cross; and then she made a cross. The

notary writes in the Latin chronicle, "At the end of the sentence Joan, fearing the fire, said she would obey the Church." There was some cheating practised on her about this retractation, because the paper which was read to her, and to which she made her mark, consisted of only two or three lines, whereas the paper finally produced was a long document of several pages. On her signing the retractation the sentence of the court of lifelong imprisonment was passed upon her. Her judges had scored their first triumph; they had urged submission on this unlettered peasant from February till May without success; but at last imprisonment, chains, poison, overstrain of every kind, had done their work; the rebellious child had submitted; but this in itself put the court in a difficulty. For months they had been saying "Submit or be burnt"; now she had submitted, and they wanted to burn her all the same. The difficulty did not prove insuperable. One of the promises made to Joan on condition of her signing the retractation was that she should be removed from the English military prison and placed in a prison belonging to the Church. She ardently desired this, and was bitterly disappointed when the promise was broken. Enormous importance had been given by her judges throughout the trial to her wearing a man's dress, and it was an absolute condition of her escaping death by fire that she should resume a

woman's dress. She therefore found herself in her old prison once more without the protection of her man's dress. A ruffianly attempt was made upon her by, I grieve to say, an Englishman, and when foiled of his design he had covered her with blows. The next day was Sunday, Trinity Sunday, May 28th, 1431. It was time for her to rise from her bed, to which she was chained. She asked her guards to unchain her so that she could rise; they did so, and took away her woman's dress, and at the same time threw down the contents of the bag which contained the male costume. She besought them for hours to give her back the woman's dress, but in vain. At last she rose and once more put on the forbidden dress. It sealed her fate, and relieved her judges of all embarrassment; she became by this act "a relapsed heretic." The bishop was heard laughing to Warwick, "Be of good cheer, the thing is done." No time was lost. The next Wednesday, May 31st, she was taken to the market place again. The stake and the faggots were there once more. Once more she was preached at. Once more she and the Bishop of Beauvais met face to face. "Bishop," she said, "it is by you I die." He heaped all manner of vile names on her head. But Massieu, the usher, was kindly and gentle to her. It is said that the sham priest, the spy, rushed forward to ask her forgiveness, and would have been killed by the English had not Warwick protected

him. Brother Isambard did not leave her. Once she cried, " St. Michael, St. Michael, help ! " But no help came. Before she ascended the lofty pile where the stake was fixed she asked for a cross. An English soldier made a rough cross with a stick which he broke on his knee, binding the pieces hurriedly together. She clasped it to her breast. Then Brother Isambard and Massieu, the usher, sent for a cross on a large staff from one of the churches, and the good priest, climbing on the faggots, held it in front of the martyr, uttering such words as he could of encouragement and help. He stood there so long that there was fear that the fire would catch his robes, and Joan herself begged him to leave her. The victim was bound ; the torch was lighted, and lurid flames and black smoke sprang into the air. Twice a cry was heard from the midst of the fire. Once it said, " My voices were of God ; they have not deceived me. " The second cry was just the name of Jesus twice repeated. Then the noblest and most heroic heart that France has ever owned ceased to beat, and there was no further sound except the weeping of the crowd.

One wonders how people could live through such events. A more than usually deep impression seems to have been made even on her enemies by the death of the maid. An Englishman who hated her with fanatic fierceness, and had sworn to add a faggot to the flames, approached the pile to do so,

but fled in terror back to his companions to say he had seen a pure white dove issue from the smoke. Almost fainting, he was led by his comrades to the nearest tavern—"a lifelike touch," says Mrs. Oliphant, "in which we recognise our countrymen." Another Englishman left the scene of execution muttering, "We are lost; we have murdered a saint." The executioner sought out Brother Isambard and confessed to him in an anguish of remorse, fearing he could never be forgiven for what he had done. One of the canons of Rouen, standing sobbing in the crowd, said to another canon, "Would that my soul were in the same place where the soul of that woman is at this moment." The notary or reporter, to whom reference has more than once been made, the same who wrote "proud reply" on the margin of his manuscript, says that he never wept so much for anything which had ever happened, and that for a whole month he could not recover his calm. This man had been almost daily in Joan's presence, taking down her words from February to May. He spent part of the payment he had received for taking the notes of her trial in buying a missal in order that he might have a perpetual reminder to pray for her.

One word more about the responsibility of the French and English nations for her death. There should be no shirking the truth that both were responsible. The English were in military possession

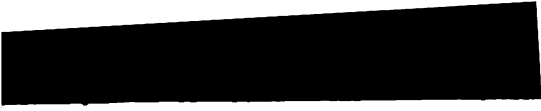
of Rouen and of the whole of Normandy; they bought her of her Burgundian captor, who, on the whole, had treated her well as long as he had charge of her. The English treated her with brutality from the time they became possessed of her, and no doubt insisted on her death by fire. But they found eager and willing instruments among Frenchmen, especially among the chief French ecclesiastics and the professors of the University of Paris. While almost the worst of all was the desertion and utter neglect of Joan after her capture by the King whom she had restored to the throne, and the whole of his party which she had raised from utter defeat and demoralisation to a position which led ultimately to the recovery of everything which they had lost. As the Romans and the Jews were jointly responsible for the death of Our Lord, so the English and the French are jointly responsible for the death of the Maid of Orleans. As between the French and English we have been more frank in confessing our fault, while they have shown a natural, but not very generous, wish to magnify our share in the bad business, and to minimise their own. One very bitter drop in our cup of humiliation is that Shakespeare, who wrote so nobly of women, wrote unworthily of Joan of Arc. This is so painful that we snatch eagerly at any evidence that the first part of Henry VI. was not written by Shakespeare at all—

so eagerly that we doubt our own trustworthiness to decide the point, and feel that the evidence ought to be weighed by a less biassed jury. But if we hang our heads when the names of Shakespeare and of Joan of Arc are mentioned together, what must be the feelings of the French when they think of Voltaire? Voltaire occupied thirty-two years of his life, from the age of thirty-six to that of sixty-eight, writing, re-writing, polishing and repolishing a poem, the whole object of which appears to be to vilify the memory of a pure girl of nineteen who had laid down her life for her country. Mr. John Morley says not only that the poem abounds in immodesty and that its whole action is centred in indecency, but that it fastens this gross chaplet round the memory of the great deliverer of the poet's own country. It thus sins against patriotism as much as it sins against the heroic dead and against decency.

Neither France nor England has any cause for national satisfaction in the thought that they were specially favoured by the revelation of Joan of Arc, and that they betrayed and murdered her while she lived, and that their greatest writers grossly vilified her after she was dead.

Not as French or English, but as men and women, we may be proud of her, and thankful for her. In the greatest natures of all is to be found the union of the man and of the woman, strength

and tenderness. It was this union to an almost miraculous degree that was the special wonder of Joan of Arc. That our poor human nature can rise now and then to such sublime heights makes a halo of glory for the whole race, and can give us thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.



**LOUISE OF SAVOY AND HER
DAUGHTER.**



LOUISE OF SAVOY AND HER DAUGHTER,

MARGARET OF ANGOULÊME, DUCHESS OF ALENÇON
AND QUEEN OF NAVARRE.

THE CHILDREN AND THEIR MOTHER.

LOUISE OF SAVOY, DUCHESS OF ANGOULÊME, with her daughter Margaret and her son Francis, form the most romantic group in French history. These three were so completely three in one that they spoke of themselves as "*nôtre trinité*." Francis was worshipped and adored by the other two; they looked at life wholly through his interests. He was more than son, brother, and sovereign to them; he was their god almost. Right and wrong lost their meaning where his commands or his interests stood in the way.

Louise, at the outset of her career, is a pathetic little figure. Left an orphan in early infancy, she was brought up by her aunt, Anne of Beaujeu, the masterful sister and guardian of Charles VIII. Her aunt lost no time in making matrimonial arrangements for her, and when Louise was two years old betrothed her to Charles, Count of Angoulême, twenty years older than the baby bride. He

tried later to get out of the engagement. He had been banished from court for having taken part in the rebellion in Brittany; but Anne held him to his promise, and the wedding took place in 1491, when Louise was fifteen years old. She was accomplished, brilliant, handsome, ambitious, and wholly without principle. She is the Lady Macbeth of the story. But her ambition was concentrated on her son, and not at all on her husband, a heavy, stupid man, who died after five years of marriage. His chief title to the esteem of Louise lay in the fact that he was *père du roy mon fils*.

The two children of the Count of Angoulême and Louise were Margaret, born in 1492, and Francis, born in 1494. From the first Louise set her whole heart, mind, and soul on Francis becoming king of France. It is an extraordinary story, as wonderful as any romance. Her son was at the date of his birth far removed from the succession. Charles VIII. was alive, was a young man of twenty-four, married to a young wife, and had had children; even if the direct line were all swept away the next heir was Louis of Orleans; he, it is true, was childless after many years of marriage; but Charles VIII.'s possible sons and Louis of Orleans stood between the baby Francis and the throne. Nevertheless, to Louise her baby boy was the future king of France. It is said that his elevation to the throne had been foretold to his





THE DAUPHIN, CHARLES ORLANT
SON OF CHARLES VIII.

FROM THE PAINTING BY BOURDICHON

mother by astrologers and others, among whom St. Francis de Paule has been mentioned. Certainly she kept it in view as the main object of her life until it was actually accomplished.

"Angoulême thou art, and Valois; and shalt be
What thou art promised "

she might have said if she had had the opportunity of reading "Macbeth."

A son had been born to Charles VIII. and Anne of Brittany in 1492. He died at Amboise on December 6th, 1495, aged three years and fifty-eight days. The restless exultation of Louise on the death of her son's rival may be guessed from the fact that she and her husband immediately set out from Cognac to visit the Duke of Orleans at Blois to congratulate him on the death of his little nephew, thus recovering his position as heir presumptive. At the court at Amboise, to which he had been summoned to console the King and Queen for the death of their son, Louis of Orleans had been unable to conceal the profound delight which the event had given him. Under the pretext of distracting the parents from their grief he gave, says Brantôme, a ball and masquerade, at which "he did such follies and danced so gaily" that the Queen was extremely angry, and Louis thought it prudent to escape from Amboise and return to his own castle at Blois. Here he received the congratulatory visit from the Count and Countess of

Angoulême just referred to. It was returning from this visit of "mirth in funeral" that Louise's husband took an attack of pleurisy which killed him.

Not much more than two years after this—April, 1498—Charles VIII. died too, and left no living child behind him; there was only his young widow, Queen Anne, but she seemed born to thwart the ambition of Louise. As the Duke of Orleans, now become Louis XII., had been married to Joan, daughter of Louis XI. for twenty-three years and was childless, Louise might be said almost to have seen the diadem of France round the brows of her adored son. But she was to go through double and triple anguish of doubts and fears before this vision was realised. The first obstacle in the way of Louise's ambition was placed there by Queen Anne. Her husband being dead, she claimed from his successor the resumption in her own right of the Duchy of Brittany. Up to the time when this inconvenient claim was made, Louis had shown every disposition to recognise Francis as his heir. He had installed Louise and her two children in the royal castle at Blois; he had invited them all to be his guests at Chinon, and had shown them great courtesy and affection. M. de Gélais wrote in his history of Louis XII.: "He gave the said lady lodgings in his castle at Chinon, over his own chamber, where he went to visit her frequently in most familiar fashion. As for the children, he did not





LOUIS XII. ENTERING GENOA IN TRIUMPH.

FROM AN OLD PRINT.

know how to show them favour enough, for had he been their father he could not have made more of them. And certes, there were few children to equal them in any rank of life, as, for their years, they were so accomplished that it was pleasant and delightful even to look at them."

Then came the widowed Queen's inconvenient claim to re-establish her private ownership of the Duchy of Brittany, and King Louis was in a serious dilemma. He saw only one way of securing the duchy without fighting for it. He was a very thrifty king, and shrank from the wasteful expenditure of war, especially if he could get what he wanted in a more economical way. This way involved the abandonment and divorce of the wife to whom he had been married for twenty-three years, and his immediate remarriage with the late king's widow. Incidentally it also involved the apparent destruction of Louise's darling hopes for her son; but it may be assumed that this did not cause Louis XII. much hesitation. This was the course actually pursued. The Pope, Alexander VI., made no difficulties in granting the divorce beyond requiring a large sum of money. Queen Joan being thus disposed of, King Louis married Anne of Brittany in January, 1499, within eight months of the death of Charles VIII.

The new Queen was exactly the same age as Louise herself, between twenty-two and twenty-

three. She had had children as the wife of Charles VIII., and there was every reason to believe that she would also bear children to Louis XII. It is not difficult to realise how the tiger-like maternal rage of Louise was excited by the prospect. There was from this time a deadly feud between the two ladies, none the less bitter because it was carried on under the outward appearance of friendship.

The anticipation of the birth of children to Louis XII. and his new wife was quickly realised; the eldest child, Princess Claude, was born in October, 1499, in Louise's own dower house of Romorantin. The child was from her birth delicate, plain, and lame; but, failing the birth of a son to her parents, she was the heiress of Brittany, and Louise decided that she should be the bride of her Francis. Anne as strenuously opposed this match, and as soon as the Emperor Maximilian's grandson and heir was born, in 1500, schemed to wed her little daughter to the Archduke Charles, afterwards Charles V. How unjustly is the present age called the age of commercialism compared with the "good old times," when there was absolutely nothing even in the most sacred of human relations which apparently respectable people were not ready to buy and sell! Not long after the birth of Princess Claude a son was born to Louis and Anne; but he scarcely survived his birth, and Louise wrote with

savage joy in her journal, "He could not retard the exaltation of my Cæsar, for he had no life."

A great deal of what we know of Louise is derived from this journal, written with her own hand. It is one of the most curious of historical documents. It was evidently not written from day to day, but probably the mood took her about 1522 or 1523 to note down the principal events of her life, and even of some years preceding her life. She begins with the birth of the Emperor Maximilian in 1459, then come notes of the birth of Louis XII. in 1462, of his wife Anne, Duchess of Brittany, and of herself in the same year, 1476. She makes no mention whatever of her own marriage, the first real flourish of trumpets records the birth of her son—"Francis, by the Grace of God King of France and my pacific Cæsar, took his first experience of earthly light at Cognac, about ten hours after noon, 1494, the twelfth day of September." The next entry is, "The first day of January of the year 1496, I lost my husband." She next notes that "my daughter Claude, conjoined to my son in marriage, was born in my house at Romorantin the 13th October, eight hours and fifty-four minutes after noon, 1499."

One of her great enemies was the Marshal de Gyé. She supposed, and with some reason, that he had been placed in her household by the king as a spy upon her conduct. She records in the

journal how this person had nearly caused the death of her son. On January 25th, 1501, Francis then being six years old, "my king, my lord, my Cæsar and my son, was run away with in the fields near Amboise, on a hackney which had been given him by Marshal de Gyé." The poor man probably thought he was making himself very agreeable in giving the child a horse, but Louise flashes out at him as if he had been a murderer, and gives thanks to God, "*toutes fois protecteur des femmes veufves et deffenseur des orphelins,*" who would not leave her desolate, deprived of her love and her one object in life. A few years later she pursued Marshal de Gyé to his ruin. Her next entry records the death of a little dog "Hapeguai, very loving and loyal to his master." Then comes the very characteristic passage already referred to: "Anne, Queen of France, on St. Agnes' day, 21st of January, had a son, but he could not retard the exaltation of my Cæsar, for he had no life." The betrothal of Francis with the Princess Claude is recorded, but it is attributed to the year 1507, whereas contemporary records place it in 1506. The birth of Margaret in 1492, and her marriage to the Duke of Alençon in 1509, are set down in the journal, but it is Francis, and not Margaret, in whom Louise is really interested. If he runs a thorn into his leg or scratches his finger it is recorded as seriously as the history of shipwrecks and

sieges. "The fifth day of June, 1515, my son, coming from Chamont to Amboise, ran a thorn into his leg, which caused him much pain, and me also, for true love forced me to suffer equally with him." His journeys, his illnesses, and his recoveries fill her field of vision, and other events interest her only according to their influence on him. One of her entries seems to require confirmation, which it has not received. The enmity between herself and Queen Anne is emphasised by all contemporary chroniclers. The Queen resisted the union between Francis and her daughter Claude to so much purpose that although she had been forced to give consent to the betrothal of the two children in 1506, she delayed the marriage, and continued to hope to marry her daughter to the Grand Duke Charles. In the negotiations leading to the betrothal of Francis and Claude in 1506, it is expressly stipulated that the proposed marriage should not be carried out if a son were born to Louis XII. It was not till Anne was dead that this hope was abandoned and the marriage allowed to take place. It was a very sombre wedding. The King insisted that everyone, even the bride and bridegroom, should wear black for the late Queen.

Louise asserts in her journal that Anne left her executor of her will with control over the fortune of her two daughters, "*Mesmement de madame Claude, reine de France, et femme de mon fils,*

laquelle j'ai honorablement et amiablement conduite; chacun le sçait, verité le cognoist, expérience le démontre, aussi fait publique renommée." "The lady doth protest too much." Louise, writing this in 1522 or thereabouts, was all-powerful. Her son was King, there was no one who could bring her to book; but it is very inconsistent with the well-known enmity and rivalry which existed between her and Anne of Brittany to suppose that the latter should have left Louise with absolute control over the fortunes of her daughters, especially as their father and natural guardian was then living. Louise had very far from a clean record in financial affairs. She loved money almost as much as she loved her son; sometimes it appeared that she loved it even more. When he was at his wit's end for money to pay the ransom of his sons to Charles V., in 1530, his sister Margaret gave with both hands and sacrificed all her gold and silver plate. Louise gave nothing, though at her death, which took place not long after, it was discovered that she had in her treasury 1,500,000 gold crowns. Earlier than this, in 1512, when Francis had embarked on his disastrous campaign in Italy, she was in part responsible for the defeat of her son's forces by diverting to her own use 400,000 gold crowns which were intended for the relief of the French army in Italy. Semblançai, superintendent of the finances, eventually suffered

on the scaffold for the crime of making over this money to the king's mother; but Louise neither gave it up nor incurred the punishment she so richly deserved for stealing it. Francis for the first time was seriously incensed against his mother; he visited her in her apartment, and with much wrath accused her of having caused the loss of his army in Italy and of the Duchy of Milan. She excused herself at the expense of Semblançai, who, she said, had long held money of hers, the proceeds of years of saving and economy. This was in the year 1522, and almost exactly corresponded in time with the writing of her journal. It may very well have been that this affair of the 400,000 crowns and her son's anger made her feel that she required whitewashing, and that no one but herself was likely to undertake the task. Hence she sits down and writes herself a testimonial for her honourable and amiable management of the large fortunes of the two princesses, Claude, the wife of Francis, and Renée, the younger daughter of Louis XII. Another entry in the journal is susceptible of a similar explanation. Louise writes: "*L'an 1515, 1516, 1517, 1518, 1519, 1520, 1521, 1522*" (that is from the date of her son's accession to that of the Semblançai affair) "*sans y pouvoir donner provision, mons fils et moi feusmes continuellement desrobés par les gens de finances.*" It is tolerably plain, if we may read between the lines, that

Louise means it to be understood that she regarded the 400,000 crowns as payment of a debt due to her own private purse. Even if the French exchequer did owe Louise money it was an inconvenient moment to exact payment, when the French army at Milan under Lautrec was at the last extremity from want of funds, and when the soldiers were mutinous, not having received any wages for eighteen months.

It only makes the malversation by Louise of the money intended for the army a blacker crime than theft, when we learn that she was actuated not only by avarice, but by the desire to ruin Lautrec, and through him the Constable of Bourbon, Charles Montpensier.

But that part of the story must come later, and we must now return to the earlier period, during the childhood of Margaret and Francis. Every circumstance deepened the rivalry between their mother and the Queen of France. Anne was wealthy, essentially narrow-minded, suspicious of learning and education, commonplace, respectable, and honest, a bigot in religion, rigid in her notions of decorum, and extremely tenacious of her rights as Queen of France and Duchess of Brittany. Louise was the poor relation; but she, and not Anne, was the great lady with great social gifts and graces, accomplished, learned, and the friend of learning, at the same time absolutely unprincipled





LOUIS XII.

AFTER AN ENGRAVING BY J. CHAPMAN

and ambitious. Anne's great interest in life was in promoting marriages. Miss Sichel tells that the Pope presented her with an "*autel portatif*," a travelling altar, at which she was licensed to perform marriages on the shortest possible notice. One imagines her travelling about with her portable altar just as the modern English lady has her tea basket. Louise, on the other hand, paid but small regard to marriage except as it served to promote her ambition for her children. The deepest rivalry between the two ladies centred in their children. Those of Anne were plain, sickly, and deficient in vitality. If they had not been the king's daughters no one would have given them a second glance; while the boy and girl of Louise would have been remarkable anywhere—full of vigour both mental and bodily, full of interest in all that life might bring them. Francis especially had almost from his cradle the gift of physical splendour which we recognise in his numerous portraits, where the crimson velvet and satin, the jewels, feathers, and lace do not obscure, but rather throw into relief the flamboyant magnificence of the man.

Louis XII. and his consort were economical to the point of cheese-paring in their personal expenditure; Francis would spend a fortune on pocket-handkerchiefs, and his jewels and clothes cost as much every year as would have kept a troop of horse. There is an eternal feud between wealthy

parsimony and lavish poverty. And the economical King knew that the magnificent young prince's bills would make their way to him to be paid. He was heard to exclaim of Francis, "*Ce garçon là me gêtera tout.*" But Queen Anne must have sighed when she compared her plain children with this young Prince Charming; and Louise, we may be sure, looked daggers, though she used none, when she thought that such another poor plain weakling, if a boy, might intervene between her Francis and the throne. In 1510 Queen Anne had another child; to the intense joy of Louise it was again a daughter, Renée, afterwards Duchess of Ferrara. The death of Anne, in 1514, seemed to make Louise sure that the prize she had so long sought was really secured. She and her son rejoiced openly at the Queen's death, and she lost no time in bringing about the marriage between the Princess Claude and Francis which Anne had so long resisted. It would not have suited her to have seen Claude married to a powerful prince like the Grand Duke Charles or Henry VIII. of England, who thereby would have captured Brittany and might from that vantage ground have tried to set aside the Salic law and claim for his wife the crown of France.

Louis XII. had sincerely loved his wife, and on her death gave way to a passion of grief. He ordered her grave to be made large enough for two coffins, and prophesied more truly than he knew

that he would quickly follow her to the next world. For once the thrifty king let himself be profuse, and the pages of Brantôme positively glow as he describes the lavish magnificence of her obsequies.

Louise now thought all her anxieties were over. She was calmly arranging the visit of Francis to Constantinople, for she had formed plans that her "pacific Cæsar" should become Emperor of the East, master of India, and a second Alexander, when her schemes were suddenly dashed to the ground by another amazing marriage by Louis XII. The broken-hearted widower, who but a few weeks earlier had been making arrangements for his own entombment, announced his betrothal and speedy marriage with Mary Tudor, the sister of Henry VIII.—eighteen years old, handsome, frolicsome, giddy, and good-natured. Louise's fury is reflected in her journal, where she describes the first meeting of the King, "*fort antique et débile*" (he was fifty-two), with his youthful bride. The marriage followed on October 9th the same year. Louis's object in his third marriage was to neutralise the opposition, even if he did not secure the support, of England in the renewal of hostilities which he was then contemplating with the Empire for the domination of Italy. The few months during which the marriage lasted must have been the bitterest of Louise's life. She hated Mary Tudor, and set spies upon her. If she could catch

her tripping she might yet overthrow her and prevent any possible child of hers succeeding. It was part of her plan for Mary's ruin that Francis, not at all against the grain, set up a lively flirtation with the young queen. But all these plots and plans were suddenly rendered superfluous, for the King died on January 1st, 1515, and Louise enters triumphantly in her journal: "My son was King of France." One of the intimate friends of Francis during his youth, M. de Fleurange, "*le jeune aventureux*," says in his memoirs that the death of Louis XII., on New Year's day, was "*une belle étrenne*" for Louise; and we can well believe it.

The giddy young Queen, Mary Tudor, did not give much anxiety. She kept her mourning state in bed for six weeks, in a chamber hung with black, from which all daylight was excluded, according to the monstrous etiquette then enforced on royal widows. But she was not without distractions. She received visits from Francis, and she then intimated to him that she proposed, as soon as her seclusion was ended, to marry Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. Francis sent for the Duke, and said, "My Lord of Suffolk, there is a bruit in this my realm that you are come to marry with the Queen, your master's sister." Suffolk is said to have replied that the "bruit" was well founded, but that he was doing nothing dishonourable nor contrary to the will of his master. However that might be,

Francis and his mother promoted the immediate marriage of the joyful widow with her lover. This took place on March 31st, 1515, exactly three months after the death of Louis. The note in Louise's journal is: "Saturday, the last day of March, 1515, the Duke of Suffolk, a man of low birth, whom Henry, eighth of the name, had sent as ambassador to the King, married Mary, sister of the said Henry, and widow of Louis XII."

Suffolk had been betrothed once and married twice already; and one of his wives was certainly living at the date on which he married Mary Tudor; for he presently applied to Pope Clement VII. for a bull to dissolve his former marriage and legalise his union with his master's sister. But these facts do not appear to have been regarded by anyone as a serious impediment. If Mary did not object, no one in France had the right to do so. Louise and Francis were too anxious to provide Mary Tudor with a husband to be particular, and this once accomplished the young dowager's improprieties had no further interest for the triumphant Louise. Mary left Paris with her old lover and new husband on April 15th, and troubled the mother of Francis no more. The English princess had more difficulty in appeasing the anger of her brother, for Suffolk went far beyond the truth in saying that Henry had consented to the marriage. Mary, to pacify him, had to sacrifice all her plate and jewels, and

also to promise to pay him £24,000 in yearly instalments. This strange marriage made Suffolk and his royal wife, twenty-two years later, the grandparents of the ill-fated Lady Jane Grey. It was surely one of Nature's most generous miracles that this delicate flower should have sprung from such a hotbed of greed and passion.

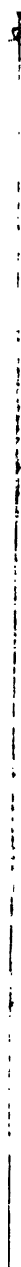
Francis and his sister Margaret had been brought up together, and she had shared in all his studies. She soon outstripped him in her knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, and in her easy grasp of modern languages. To another of her interests he was almost entirely a stranger. Her governess, Mme. de Châtillon, very early interested her in the movement, then beginning, for the reform of the Church. Her chief companions in her childhood were the group of noble youths who had been selected as comrades for Francis. Among them were Gaston de Foix (killed at Ravenna), whose extraordinary beauty may still be seen in his effigy in the Castello at Milan; Bonnivet (killed at Pavia); Charles of Montpensier, afterwards Duke of Bourbon; and Anne of Montmorency, both in succession Constables of France. Among these boys Margaret reigned as a little queen. With several of them she retained a life-long friendship. For many years she kept up continual correspondence with Montmorency, and the volume of her letters to him almost equals that of her letters to Francis.



HEAD OF GASTON DE FOIX.

FROM HIS MONUMENT IN THE CASTELLO AT MILAN.

From a Photograph by Altieri, Florence.



Probably all the boys were in love with her; meanwhile she was being sought in marriage by great kings and heirs-apparent. Their suits were, however, for one reason or another set aside, and in 1509 Margaret was married, at the age of seventeen, to the Duke of Alençon. This marriage was arranged on a simple commercial basis. Margaret never even seemed to have any personal affection for her first husband. She left him for years at a time, and after her brother became king spent nearly all her time either with Francis or in his service. Her marriage was dictated by the wish to promote her brother's interests. This was an all-sufficient justification in the eyes of both mother and daughter. The Duke of Alençon was mean and insignificant both in character and appearance, and his slender mental advantages had never been made the most of by education. But he had a means of making his influence felt at court; he claimed the County of Armagnac, which had reverted to the crown in default of male heirs. He perpetually pressed this claim, which he derived by descent from his great-grandfather John, fourth Count of Armagnac. Louis XII., with his habitual eye to economy, hated the expense both of war and of lawsuits, he therefore agreed that if the Duke of Alençon married Margaret, the County of Armagnac should be her marriage portion. This suited everyone admirably. The Duke of Alençon made a marriage far beyond

his deserts and position, the King avoided a tedious and expensive lawsuit, Francis and Louise were quite satisfied because the revenues of the County of Armagnac—if at Margaret's disposal—would be entirely at their command, and finally Margaret was satisfied because she never wished for anything but her brother's advancement. The person who was most to be pitied was perhaps the dull Duke of Alençon. He obtained a brilliant and beautiful wife it is true; but she never cared for him nor made any pretence of doing so, and his claim to the County of Armagnac was satisfied more in appearance than in reality. Then and always Margaret was true to the guiding principle of her life. Her brother and his interests, real or supposed, were her guiding star. The marriage took place at Blois, on October 9th, 1509.

The "trinity" was now broken up. Margaret was installed in her own court at Argentan; Francis, the year before, not long after his betrothal, left for the royal court at Blois, and, as Louise says in her journal, "*me laissa toute seule*" at Amboise. The death of Anne of Brittany, the marriage of Francis and Claude, the re-marriage of Louis XII. with Mary Tudor, and his death, were all crowded into the year between January, 1514, and January, 1515. Francis had not failed on his marriage to demand from Louis the cession of Brittany as his wife's inheritance in her own right,

and to this the King had given a reluctant consent. It is possible that this exaction had its share in bringing about Louis's third and last marriage, for his temper, according to the chronicles of Fleurange, was decidedly "*chatouilleux*," which may perhaps be best translated as "cat-like," for he loved to scratch even if he were powerless to inflict a deeper wound. He gave another instance of this disposition when he was negotiating his marriage with Mary Tudor. He displayed to the English nobleman, the Earl of Worcester, who acted as Mary's proxy at the betrothal, the magnificent jewels he was about to give his young bride—"the goodliest and richest sight of jewels I ever saw," wrote the Earl to Cardinal Wolsey. After a detailed description he added: "There are ten or twelve of the principal stones that there hath been refused for them 100,000 ducats. After the King had showed me these jewels he said, 'My wife will not have all these at once; I shall give them to her one by one, that I may receive in return more abundant thanks and tokens of her affection.'"

During these anxious months, at the end of 1514, Louise, sick as she was with hope deferred, clung to the prophecy, made by Francis de Paule, that her son should be king; and after he had ascended the throne she showed her gratitude by causing the holy man to be canonised. Her way of describing this in her journal is characteristic:

“ L’an 1519, le 5 Juillet, frère François de Paule, des frères mendiants évangélistes, fut par moi canonisé; à tout le moins j’en ai payé le taxe.”

Louise never showed any genuine religious feeling. She would make a pilgrimage on foot to a celebrated shrine, not from love of God, but for value received, or anticipated, for her son, her “glorious and triumphant Cæsar.” If his arms and fortunes prospered, she would make a suitable acknowledgment. For instance, this is the reference in her journal to the coronation of her son on the day of the conversion of St. Paul, in 1515. “For this event I am much beholden and grateful to Divine mercy, as by it I have been recompensed for all the adversities and reverses which happened to me in my early years and in the flower of my youth. Humility [!] was then my constant companion; nevertheless, patience never forsook me.”

If Francis suffered a reverse she would offer an expiatory victim, and would order some poor wretch who had been accused of insulting the sacrament to have his hand cut off and then to be burnt alive.

When the Emperor Maximilian died, in 1519, the three candidates for election were the three young kings, Henry of England, Charles of Spain, and Francis of France. Henry’s candidature was only formal; the real contest lay between Charles and Francis. Both bribed handsomely; but the credit of the frugal Charles was far better than



FRANCIS I. OF FRANCE.

FROM A RELIEF BY AN UNKNOWN SCULPTOR IN THE CASTELLÒ, MILAN.

Photograph by Anderson, Rome.



that of the spendthrift Francis. "At the critical moment Francis could not get credit. The Swabian league forbade the merchants of Augsburg to accept his bills."* And on June 28th, 1519, the electors unanimously voted for Charles. The election cost him 850,000 florins; but he won. The entry in the journal of Louise is very typical of her character and of her attitude where religious considerations were involved. "In July, 1519, Charles, fifth of the name, son of Philip, Archduke of Austria, was, after the empire had been vacant for the space of five months, elected King of the Romans, in the town of Frankfort. Would to God it had been longer vacant, or even that it had for ever been left in the hands of Jesus Christ, to whom it belongs, and to no other." If Francis had been elected, what a different note would she not have sung?

THE REFORM OF THE CHURCH AND THE REVIVAL OF
LEARNING.

LOUISE was a worldling to the finger-tips, and so was Francis. Not so Margaret; she had genuine religious fervour. She dearly wished above all things to gain her brother's sympathy for the cause of the reformation. Madame de Châtillon, who had fostered Margaret's piety in her childhood, remained with her as lady-in-waiting after her marriage. For a time Margaret believed she had gained the sym-

* Cambridge Modern History, Vol. II., p. 41.

pathy of Francis for the reform of the church, and she even had hopes of her mother. She constantly interceded with her brother to save the lives of eminent scholars and theologians whom the bigots of the church wished to condemn to the flames or to perpetual imprisonment. For some years Francis allowed himself to be influenced by her prayers and petitions. Thus when Lefèvre, Louis Berquin, and other pious scholars were condemned to death for such trivialities as that they had taught that Mary, the sister of Lazarus, Mary Magdalene, and the Mary, of the pot of ointment, were three separate persons, Margaret besought her brother, and generally with success, to use his royal prerogative of mercy, and to save them from the flames. On the intellectual side Francis was in sympathy with his sister, and for some years Margaret failed to see that his support went no further. If he had been as open to genuine religious impulses as she was, the history of France, and probably of Christendom, would have been very different; but Francis was essentially without religion. He sometimes supported the reformers, but sometimes—and as his reign went on, more frequently—persecuted them, and lent his authority to the most bigoted and reactionary party in the church.

For some years after the accession of Francis, Margaret reigned as virtual Queen of France. Poor, quiet, submissive Claude was quite in the

background. Margaret always treated her generously and affectionately. It was not in her nature to be unkind even to a sister-in-law. There was no question of jealousy between the two. Francis never cared for Claude, and neglected her from the day of his marriage till that of her death. She was simply the mother of his seven children; she never had any other part or lot in his life. When she died, in 1524, after ten years of marriage, Francis was not even by her bedside. She was at Blois dying, he was at Bourges with his mother and sister. A message was sent to recall Francis to his dying wife, but he disregarded it. He was too much occupied with the preparations for his ill-fated expedition to Italy to obey the summons. He contented himself with sending his mother and sister back to Blois. They arrived too late. Claude was dead, aged twenty-four, and probably thankful to be where there is no marrying or giving in marriage. Her father's indecent marriage with Mary Tudor almost immediately after her mother's death had been painful and distasteful to her, and as the neglected wife of the gorgeous Francis she had had very few hours of joyousness in her short life. The companionship of her little sister Renée was one of her consolations. News of her death was, of course, at once conveyed to Francis. He did not return, but he ordered her the handsomest funeral that money could buy, and ap-

peared to be rather surprised that her death should cause him any emotion. Margaret, in a letter, represents him as saying to their mother: "If my life could be given in exchange for hers, willingly would I yield it up. Never could I have believed that the bonds of marriage were so hard and difficult to sever."

Margaret henceforward devoted herself to the children of Francis, and became a second mother to them. Many of her prettiest and most playful letters are addressed to her brother about his children. The baby Charles, "M. d'Angoulême," as Margaret ceremoniously calls him even when he was only three years old, seems to have been her special pet. Her letters to Francis about his children show that whatever changes four centuries may have wrought in the world, the devoted aunt was much the same in the fifteenth as in the twentieth. In a letter written in 1531, Margaret, referring to the long drawn out illness of their mother, tells Francis that there had been no improvement until the visit of "three little doctors, who speedily made her forget her pain." These were the three little princes, the Dauphin Francis, Henry, Duke of Orleans, and Charles, Duke of Angoulême.

"The princes, however, were very sorrowful and discontented when they learned your departure; for M. d'Angoulême had made up his mind, if he could only see

you again, never to loose your hand ; for he says that even if you go to hunt the wild boar, he knows that you will take good care that nothing hurts him."

It is a pretty touch, the little prince of nine years old, who determines when he next sees his father never to loose his hand. He had a mind to attach himself to the chariot of that glorious sun even if he could not stop it in its course.

Soon after Francis first became king, Margaret left her husband almost entirely, and devoted herself to her brother. "The trinity" were reunited. Margaret engaged the interest of Francis in the revival of learning, and endeavoured to engage it in the reform of the Church. The two objects were not the same, but they were touched at many points. The University of Paris and the Sorbonne were in vehement opposition to them both. They denounced the teaching of Greek and Hebrew with passion. In 1521 the University of Paris condemned Luther's doctrines and ordered his book to be publicly burnt. In the same year the heads of the Sorbonne and of the University came in a deputation to Francis to entreat him to check the study of Greek and Hebrew among students and foreign professors on the ground that such persons, armed with the knowledge of the languages in which the Scriptures were written, "insinuated themselves into the houses of persons of quality and insolently assumed the liberty of interpreting the Bible." Francis, animated by Mar-

garet, dealt very shortly with these learned opponents of learning, and said he would not have the students of Greek molested. "To persecute those who teach us would be," he declared, "to prevent able men from coming into our country." But the powers of ignorance and bigotry were not so easily put down. For years, and with continually increasing vehemence as the reform movement and the revival of learning gathered strength, the Sorbonne and the University headed the forces of obscurantism in a fight to the finish. Royal displeasure, continually and vigorously expressed over a considerable term of years, could not repress them. Greek was vigorously denounced by the University and the Sorbonne; it was the tongue of pagans and the mother of all the heresies. Hebrew was as bad, because it was the language of the Jews. Learning and science were equally dangerous; they opened men's minds to think and observe. The education given by the University and the Sorbonne consisted of absurd hair splittings over such points as whether "if a donkey were led in a leash to market it was the cord or the holder of the cord that actually led him." * The first gravedigger in Hamlet might have been a professor in this school of learning.

While education was thus reduced to an absurdity, Church and University lent themselves to the toleration of every kind of moral iniquity. By

* Miss Sichel's "Women and Men of the French Renaissance."





MARGARET OF ANGOULÊME.

FROM A DRAWING IN THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.

Photograph by P. Sarranand.

the payment of money every sin could be absolved, and there was a regular tariff of charges for absolution for various crimes; the tariff varied with the wealth of the applicant; the rich had to pay more than the poor. Ecclesiastical offences were the most expensive, and it was cheaper to murder a layman than to rob a church.

Against this international system of ignorance and viciousness all the best men in Europe combined: Sir Thomas More, Dean Colet, and Archbishop Waring headed the movement in England, Erasmus led the van on the Continent of Europe, seconded by such men as Reuchlin in Germany, Budé and Berquin in France, Ochino in Italy. At first there was no idea of separating from the Church of Rome; the whole wish of the earlier leaders was to secure reform within the church, and to base a purified and spiritualised religion on a study of the Bible, and of the best philosophers and poets of antiquity.

It is to the eternal glory of Margaret of Angoulême that she threw herself heart and soul on the right side in this most profoundly interesting struggle. She never became a Protestant, and never separated herself from the communion of the Church of Rome; the coarse violence of some of the manifestations of the Protestant movement disgusted and partially alienated her. But she never wavered from the position she took up all through the years

when she was the first lady in France, of the protector of the new learning and the humble devotee of a religion which was pure and undefiled. During the early years of her brother's reign he had made her Duchess of Berry in her own right, which gave her a large revenue and the control of the University of Bourges. Here she spent a large proportion of her income in educating poor scholars; she opened her doors to the men of learning and character who were driven from Paris by the bigotry of the Sorbonne. But she did more than this; she carried the war into the enemies' camp in Paris itself. After eight years' quiet persistent work in the way of preparation, she founded the Collège de France, while with feminine tact she made Francis believe that he was founding it himself. Everything had to be done in the King's name and with his consent. But Margaret gave the motive power and kept the King's interest alive. Budé, the great Greek scholar, Jean du Bellay (afterwards Cardinal) and his two brothers threw themselves with enthusiasm into the scheme. Budé was a scholar of European reputation. It was in his house in Paris that Erasmus and Sir Thomas More first met and laid the foundation of a life-long friendship which had many important consequences. He had an intense enthusiasm for Greek, a knowledge of which he had acquired under extraordinary difficulties. The college was really created as a rival to the University,

but its promoters were diplomatists as well as scholars, and it was very modest in its first scope, dimensions, and title. It was not a university, but a "collège universitaire"; it was at first to consist of two chairs only, one of Greek and one of Hebrew. This was in 1529. In 1530 the professorships were increased from two to five, and in 1545 to eleven, when Arabic, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, and literature each had its chair. To the new college was affiliated the printing establishment of the Estiennes, which was already hateful to the Sorbonne because it had published a translation of the New Testament into French. Erasmus took the keenest interest in the foundation of the college, and Margaret and her brother desired that he should become its first principal; but this offer, like many other flattering offers, including that of a cardinal's hat from the Pope, Erasmus, for good reasons, declined. Francis endowed the college with an annual revenue of 50,000 crowns.

The Sorbonne and the University quite well knew who was the real author of the new college, and they neither forgot nor forgave. It was Margaret who constantly intervened for the protection of men, learned and unlearned, whose crime it was to study the Scriptures, and to dare to think for themselves in matters of conduct and religion; and now, as the persecutors well knew, it was Margaret who was founding this

college which was to carry the war into their own province of education. The boldness and persistency of the attacks made on Margaret, the King's sister, his devoted friend and counsellor, the most powerful lady in the kingdom and virtual Queen of France, give a vivid picture of the political and social power of the Church. Ecclesiasticism was a power outside the State, and often antagonistic to it. The Sorbonne and the University of Paris put themselves in open opposition to the King and the King's sister. When Margaret wrote "The Mirror of a Sinful Soul," and when a book of Hours was prepared for her by the King's confessor, Guillaume Petit, Bishop of Senlis, leaving out many of the usual invocations to the saints, she was summoned by the Sorbonne to appear before its court on the charge of heresy. She defied her would-be prosecutors and retaliated by writing satirical poems in which she represented a doctor of the Sorbonne eager to put down heresy with fire and faggot, but willing to be mollified by means of bribery. The anger of the Sorbonne and University was great; but they bided their time and struck back with all their strength when the right moment came. Francis and Margaret, or rather Francis, urged thereto by Margaret, invited Melancthon to Paris with a view to bringing about a purification of the church. Melancthon was a reformer after Margaret's own heart, gentle and moderate, desiring

to reconcile rather than to estrange; earnestly working for the reform of the church from within so as to prevent the disruption of Christendom. Melancthon hesitated to accept the position offered him in Paris; he pleaded delay and the necessity of obtaining the consent of his sovereign, the Elector of Saxony. This consent was obtained, but Luther unfortunately intervened and begged Melancthon at least to postpone his departure. This played into the hands of the University and the Sorbonne, which were bitterly opposed to the presence of Melancthon in Paris. The delay was in fact fatal to the scheme. In the interval the Cardinal de Tournon (afterwards responsible for the massacre of the Vaudois) openly upbraided Francis for desiring, by summoning Melancthon to his capital, "to spread the deadly poison of heresy which he diffuses with subtle skill." Every kind of political intrigue was brought to bear both in Paris and in Saxony to prevent the scheme being carried out, and finally the Elector of Saxony withdrew the permission he had given to Melancthon to leave his dominions. In the long continued duel to the death between Margaret and the Reformers on the one side and the forces of obscurantism, headed by the University and the Sorbonne, on the other, the chances of victory seemed certainly for the first half of the reign of Francis to rest with the Reformers. The University and the Sorbonne constantly injured

themselves by the gross violence of their representatives. Noel Béda was one of the chief of these. He attacked Margaret again and again with unscrupulous violence, and encouraged the grossest attacks on her by others. Their aim was to break the influence which Margaret possessed over her brother, the King. A monk in a sermon recommended that she should be sewn in a sack and thrown into the Seine. The Collège de Navarre placed upon the stage in Paris a "morality" play, in which the King's sister, at that time Queen of Navarre, was represented as a woman who neglects the spinning wheel in order to accept a translation of the Bible into French offered to her by a monstrous demon. The ensuing conversation was such as to earn condemnation for its insolent indecency, even in those times, which were very far from squeamish. The "morality" ended by the transformation of the Queen herself into a hideous demon, which was carried off shrieking to the infernal regions. This precious composition was performed in the presence of the principal by four professors of theology, assisted by the scholars of the college. Francis was furious; less with the theological views of the college than with the insult to his own person through that of his sister. A court official, attended by a body of archers, marched down to the college to arrest all who had been primarily concerned in the performance. A free fight ensued, and the archers had to

be reinforced, but in the end the dramatic career of the four professors and the principal of the college was interrupted by confinement in the Conciergerie. By lifting her little finger Margaret could have consigned them to the galleys for life; but it was wholly characteristic of her that she chose a nobler sort of revenge. She interceded with Francis on their behalf and obtained their release. Béda, alone, who was suspected of being the author of the play, received a severer punishment, and was banished from France for two years. It was Béda of whom Erasmus said, "There is a good three thousand monks in his one person."

In another contest with Béda and the Sorbonne Margaret was less triumphant. One of the most distinguished of French Reformers was Louis de Berquin. He was of noble family, and one of the King's bodyguard; his mind was naturally studious and refined, and he had a witty tongue and pen. He wrote on the subject of the reform of religion, and he translated the works of Erasmus, Luther and Melancthon into French; he had the works printed at his own expense, and circulated them among his friends. The spirit of compromise was not in him; his upbringing as a noble had given him no schooling in hiding his opinions. Erasmus begged him to be more on his guard, but caution and compromise were wholly foreign to him. This man, of whom Theodore Béza said, "He might have been the Luther

of France had Francis been a Frederick of Saxony," was marked down by Bédá as his prey. The first attack was made in 1523; Bédá, on behalf of the Sorbonne, urged the Syndic to pay a domiciliary visit to Berquin's house, which was subjected to a rigorous search. The heretical writings just referred to were found, carried off in triumph, and condemned to be burnt by the public executioner. Berquin himself was summoned before the court of the Sorbonne and ordered to retract his errors. He gave an absolute and uncompromising refusal. He was thereupon thrown into prison on the charge of heresy; the stake at which other less highly placed Reformers had recently perished was in full view, but Berquin resolutely refused to retract. His friends went straight to Margaret, and she to Francis. The result was an immediate and peremptory order for his release. The hearing of the complaint against Berquin was transferred from the ecclesiastical court to the Council of State, which dismissed him with a slight reprimand, and the King then immediately reinstated him in his offices at court.

But this was only the first trial of strength between the opposing forces. While Francis was a prisoner in Spain in 1525, after the battle of Pavia, the attack on Berquin was renewed. Louise had been made Regent on the departure of the King on his Italian expedition. Her authority as Regent had met with some opposition from the Parliament

and University. When the great reverse of Pavia came, all the reactionary elements in French society burst into full cry that the woes of France were sent as a divine punishment for the sin of favouring the reform of religion. The Sorbonne, with Bédacq as its chief spokesman, clamoured for power to sweep the heretics out of existence; the University and the Parliament joined in the cry for blood. "Heresy," said they, "has raised its head among us, and the King, by failing to erect scaffolds against it, has drawn down the wrath of Heaven on the kingdom." Louise cared nothing for religion one way or the other; she had been temporarily attracted by the learning and general cultivation of the leading Reformers, but she did not hesitate to throw them to the wolves of popular clamour. With the royal assent now in her hands, the fires of persecution were once more lighted in France. She hoped thereby to conciliate the opposition of the Parliament to her regency, and to obtain the active intervention of the Pope on behalf of her son. She therefore consented not only to persecution by the Sorbonne, but also to the establishment of the Inquisition in France. A decree was issued authorising the handing over to selected bishops for trial all accused of sympathy with the doctrines of Luther; they were then to be delivered over to the secular arm and be burnt alive. Berquin was again seized under this decree as one of its earliest victims. He

was thrown into prison and condemned to the stake. He remained as stern and unbending as before. Others had bowed before the storm and had recanted opinions which they truly held. Let those who would have been more robust condemn them. The wonder always is that there were so many who were faithful unto death. Louis de Berquin was one. His friends knew that only one thing could save him—Margaret's personal influence. She exerted it to the utmost with her mother, and it utterly failed. Louise thought she knew what she was about, and believed that by burning and torturing the Reformers she was buying papal support for Francis and possibly preventing an internal insurrection against herself and her son in France. She remained deaf to Margaret's entreaties. The Princess had but one resource left: a direct appeal to Francis in his Spanish prison. She did not appeal in vain. Quickly there came a royal decree from Francis to the Parliament commanding the release of the gentleman of his chamber, Louis de Berquin. Francis also addressed his mother as Regent, and commanded her to intimate officially that all processes against heretics, "*ces hommes d'excellent savoir*," should be suspended until after his return from captivity, and that no more executions should be allowed unless they had received his royal confirmation.

Again Berquin was saved, and more than Ber-

quin. The fires and faggots of the persecutors were stayed for the time being throughout France; thus, at the end of the second act of the tragedy, Margaret and the friends of the Reformation were triumphant. How, therefore, did it happen that the third act ended so gloomily, that the brave gentleman, twice condemned and twice rescued by the direct intervention of the King and the King's sister, should have fallen a victim four years later to his implacable enemies?

Louis de Berquin, twice rescued, as we have seen, was burnt alive on April 24th, 1529, in the Place de Grève, Paris, in the presence of an immense crowd. What was Margaret doing? She had interceded again, and had interceded in vain. Francis now turned a deaf ear to her entreaties. What was the cause of the change? The answer is a sad one. A man's foes are those of his own household. The cause of the Reformation in France had been thrown back by the violence of the more ignorant and bigoted of the Reformers.

Everyone will remember in Greek history the extraordinary consternation produced in Athens in the fifth century B.C. by the mutilation of the statues of Hermes. Grote describes in a memorable passage the intensity of mingled dismay, terror, and wrath which seized the whole of Athens on the morning when the outrage upon the statues became known. Something not dissimilar to this happened

in Paris. The most sacred image which Paris contained was one of the Virgin and Child at the corner where the Rue des Rosiers crossed the Rue des Juifs in the Quartier St. Antoine. One morning in 1528 it was discovered that this sacred image had been wantonly and maliciously destroyed. It had been not merely mutilated, but reduced to a formless heap of rubbish. The rage, terror, and consternation of Paris were boundless. The King, when he heard of the outrage, burst into tears. The intense feeling excited is one of the things which cannot be argued about, but must be accepted as a fact. The very same people who could, without much emotion or any sensations of extreme rage or shame, look on while a living human creature was burnt alive or torn limb from limb, were excited to a fever heat of wild and bitter wrath by the desecration of a stone image. The "estrapade" had been specially invented to heighten and prolong the sufferings of the victims of the Inquisition in France. By means of an iron chain the living sacrifice was lowered into the flames, and then after a few moments raised out of them and urged to make recantation. This process was repeated again and again while any life remained in the poor tortured body. Francis himself could attend such an exhibition as this, accompanied by members of the court, female as well as male, could see the pyres lighted and watch the process till the smell of the burning

flesh turned the ladies sick; but when it came to destroying a statue, his wrath was unbounded; the crime was one for which expiation must be made by the King in person, representing the whole realm of France. He caused the desecrated image to be replaced by one made of solid silver; with his own hands he placed it in the niche, and caused a strong iron grille to be erected for its protection. All this was done to the accompaniment of the most stately ceremonial. The King was attended by the whole court, by the princes of the blood royal, and by all the great officers of state.

The intense emotion caused by the desecration of the image produced a strong reaction against the reform of the church, and against the persons of those known to favour reform. The love of Francis for his sister was one of the very few unselfish emotions which can be traced in him; but even Margaret's position and influence were shaken. The court life was a life of intrigue, envy, and jealousy, and there were not wanting people in Francis's intimate circle who were only too glad to undermine Margaret's hitherto nearly absolute influence over her brother. The Constable Montmorency was one of these. For years Margaret had believed him to be her friend, and had treated him with every mark of affectionate consideration. But when Francis was one day inveighing in the presence of Montmorency against heresy and heretics, and expressing

his determination to root them out of France, Montmorency ventured to say that he must begin with his own court, and with his own sister. Montmorency would never have dared to hint even an attack on Margaret unless her influence had been seriously impaired. But with all the faults of Francis, he turned a deaf ear to Montmorency's words, and replied brusquely that he would not have his sister's name brought in, and added, "She loves me too well to believe anything which I do not believe, or to adopt any faith harmful to my realm." But though Francis would listen in private to no attacks on his sister, in public he declared he "would cut off his right arm and cast it into the flames if it were infected with this heretic pestilence." The words were inevitably interpreted as pointing at Margaret, and it was well understood that the brother and sister were no longer so absolutely at one as in former years. Thus it was that Margaret's intercession to Francis for Louis de Berquin's life was unheeded, and that on the third occasion on which he was condemned to death the faggots and the stake did not claim their victim in vain.

There was, moreover, another reason for the newly born zeal of Francis against the Reformers. In 1528-30 he was in great straits for money. He had quitted his Spanish prison in 1526, but he had been forced to give as hostages to Charles V. his two young sons, the Dauphin, Francis, aged eight, and

Henri, Duke of Orleans (afterwards Henri II.), aged seven. To release these two children, Francis was prepared to commit every kind of cheerful perjury. But Charles V. was wary and cautious, and knew his man. He at first demanded that Francis should give himself up in exchange for his sons, and was with difficulty persuaded to accept a ransom; this, he insisted, should be in hard cash, two millions of gold crowns. Margaret, as already stated, gave all she had, and parted with her plate and jewels to give liberally. Louise gave nothing. The chancellor Duprat wrote to Montmorency, "Touching the matter of the money about which you and the King wrote to me, I have tried every way in the world to raise it through the banks, and from other quarters, but as soon as I mention the loan everyone drops his ears and refuses to listen to me." In these straits the King summoned an Assembly of the Notables, and they voted him 1,300,000 livres, but the clergy made it a condition, to which the King readily assented, that he should take active measures against heresy. Thus the accident of the critical position of the young princes told against Berquin and the other Reformers. The ransom of the little boys was partly paid by the best blood in France.

Duprat, the chancellor, who was also Archbishop of Sens and a cardinal, conceived the notable plan of making the money, thus painfully accumulated,

go further, by paying the ransom of the princes in debased coin. He was found out. The envoys of the Emperor, deputed to receive the ransom at Fontarabia, demanded that the metal should be tested, and it was proved to be an alloy of copper and gold. Hereafter, every gold piece was separately tested, weighed and placed in strong safes by the Spaniards, a process which occupied four months. To such humiliation was Prince Charming reduced, he who had prided himself in youth on being "fantastically honourable." The profuse extravagance of Francis always made him short of money, and had destroyed his credit even before the disastrous Italian campaign of 1525. Not even the bargain called the Concordat, which had been made between Francis and Pope Leo X., in December, 1515, had sufficed to keep Francis in funds. By this arrangement the revenues of the French Church were placed under the control of the crown in exchange for the support of Francis in upholding the rule of the Medici family in Florence. The King under this agreement had made most unscrupulous use of the revenues of the church. Bishoprics and other preferments were used to pay officers of state, or disposed of in a less reputable fashion. The Venetian Ambassador wrote, "Thenceforward the King began to distribute bishoprics at the solicitation of the ladies of the court, and to give abbeys to his soldiers so that they trafficked at the court of France in bishoprics and

abbeys, as in Venice they do in pepper and cinnamon."

The unscrupulous character of the Concordat and the corrupt use which Francis made of it, by no means signified that he was exempt from ecclesiastical domination. If he robbed the Church, he also trembled before it. The church party, not unnaturally, pointed to the disasters of France in the wars with Charles V., the defeat of Pavia, and the imprisonment of Francis in Spain, as signs of the wrath of Heaven caused by the Concordat, as well as by the encouragement given by Francis and his sister to the doctrines of Luther and Calvin.

The affair of the placards was very much on the same lines as the mutilation of the statue, and had nearly the same consequences in causing a vehement reaction in Paris and throughout France against the principles of the Reformation. It may be said to have had even worse consequences, for it weakened, though it did not alienate, Margaret's sympathy with the reform movement. On October 18th, 1534, on all the public buildings of Paris, on the gates of the King's Palace, at Blois and Amboise, and simultaneously on a number of cathedrals, universities, and palaces throughout France, appeared placards attacking the doctrine of the mass in the most violent, not to say indecent, manner. Even the strongest protestants of the present time describe the wording of these placards

as "impious and profane," "coarse and offensive." The placards were posted on the doors of the King's bedchamber at Blois, and when he came in great wrath to Paris they followed him to the Louvre, and smaller papers of a similar character were found under his pillow. There was another great outburst of anti-Protestant wrath. Burnings and tortures of all kinds were resorted to, and the vilest measures of espionage were adopted. The printing press was for a time stopped altogether, and was afterwards subjected to a strict censorship. The more refined and sensitive of those who favoured the Reformation were bitterly wounded. Many were permanently estranged. Roussel, Bishop of Oléron, who had been one of the leaders of the French Protestant movement, and a close adviser and friend of Margaret, and her chaplain, was thrown into prison, and for a long time his life hung in the balance. It is needless to say that Margaret did not forsake him; but it required all her influence continuously exerted to secure his acquittal. Humbler victims to the number of twenty-three, men and women, were burned. Margaret felt that she stood alone. Her first husband had died in 1525, and she had married the King of Navarre in 1527, but neither her husband nor her brother gave her any support. Roussel had prepared a sort of confession of faith which was called "*La Messe à sept points.*" Francis rejected

it contemptuously, and warned his sister that "it smelt of faggots." Her husband, entering her apartment and finding her engaged in some theological argument with a Calvinist preacher, roughly boxed her on the ears and told her she wanted to know too much. It was after this renewed outburst against the doctrines of the Reformation that Rousset, du Bellay, Budé, and other sympathisers compromised by outward observance of the forms and ceremonies of Catholicism. Margaret acted in a similar manner; they were partly influenced by the disgust with which the odious character of the placards had filled them; and also, it can hardly be doubted, by the terror occasioned by the vehemence with which the persecution of the Protestants was carried out. An edict had been issued to the effect that anyone convicted by two witnesses of being a Lutheran should be burned; within a week fifty Lutherans were in prison awaiting execution. The Spanish Inquisition was already a byeword throughout Europe, and the French Lutherans expected a repetition of its bloody orgies in their own country. It was in the interval between the desecration of the image and the posting of the placards that Calvin had been compelled to fly from Paris. He was henceforth an exile, sheltered at first by Margaret at Nérac, and afterwards taking refuge at Bâle and Geneva. He consistently and vehemently opposed all compromise, and vigorously de-

nounced those who outwardly conformed to Rome while inwardly mistrusting her. He was no respecter of persons, and rated Margaret as soundly for what he deemed her weakness as he would have done the humblest peasant in France. He branded as "Nicodemites" all Reformers who lacked the courage to come out of the ancient Church. With him it was "all or nothing"; the name of compromise could not be so much as mentioned in his presence. But then he had to seek safety out of France; if he had held it his duty to remain in his own country he would have shared the fate of Louis de Berquin.

Margaret, however, henceforth compromised. There could be no life for Francis's sister which excluded her from his dominions, and sincere as her interest in the reform of the Church was, Francis was right when he said his sister would never believe anything that was hurtful to him, or which separated her from him.

PAVIA, 1525.

Throughout Margaret's life the dominant note of her character, as we have seen, was her unmeasured devotion to Francis and to everything that was his. She married, but she preferred her brother to her husband. She had children, but though she was very heartbroken when her little boy died, she said in so many words to Francis that she loved his

children better than her own. The husbands found this attitude a little trying, and so did the daughter. Her first husband she never even made any attempt to care for; Francis was all in all to her. When, after prolonged absences from her husband, spending years with her brother, and constantly employed in serving his interests, the Duke of Alençon at last succeeded in carrying her off for a time to his home at Argentan, she was angry and miserable. She wrote an entreating letter to Francis begging him to visit her, or, if that were impossible, she says, if he will signify his approval, she will leave Argentan to meet him "feigning another intent." She speaks of the "lamentable misery" she endured through the mere fact of separation, and finally begs him to burn her letters and bury their contents in eternal silence, otherwise her miserable life will be worse than death. This letter which Margaret so earnestly entreated Francis to destroy is now part of the historical collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale, and is quoted at full length in Miss Freer's "Life of the Queen of Navarre." It reveals the great fault of her life and character, the reason why, with all her sweetness and lively intelligence, she failed in her main objects in life, the reform of religion in France, and that Francis should lead the other princes of Europe in establishing this reform on a sure basis and in promoting the revival of learning. Her attitude to Francis was simply that

of slavish idolatry, and idols are proverbially deaf and blind. She told him that he was more to her than father, mother, or husband; that her own daughter was dear to her mainly because Francis had adopted her as his own. She said she kissed his letters daily, and carried them on her person as relics. He promised her, after her marriage to the King of Navarre, that he would win back for her husband his lost Spanish provinces. He not only broke his word, but wrote to the Emperor begging him to disregard Henry's claim to the provinces, "even though he hath taken to wife my dearly beloved and only sister." But no treachery on the part of Francis could change the slavish adoration of his sister. Thus she came by degrees to lose her influence over him. Why should he trouble to deserve her approbation and admiration when she approved and admired everything he did because he did it? Thus the higher nature was lowered to the meaner, and not *vice versâ*. She obeyed him in all things unhesitatingly. At his desire she brought about a marriage between two people who particularly objected to each other, and had formed other matrimonial contracts. At his desire she abandoned her daughter Jeanne, at the age of two, leaving her to be brought up by strangers, a victim to a lonely and miserable childhood. At his desire she insisted on the marriage of Jeanne to the Duke of Cleves, although the little princess exhausted every means

of proving her vehement hostility to the match. The usually gentle Margaret ordered her daughter to be thrashed daily till she yielded, and the dauntless child put on record a protestation in which she said that her consent to the marriage had only been wrung from her under chastisement so severe that she believed, if continued, it would have cost her life.

A few specimens will suffice to prove that in her letters to her brother Margaret exhausted every expression of worship and adoration which her pen could command. To be with him whom she looked upon as more than "father, brother, husband," was her highest joy. She would lay aside her royal blood and accompany him as his washerwoman if no higher rôle could be assigned to her. "Whatever it may be, even to casting to the winds the ashes of my bones to do you service, nothing can seem to me strange, or difficult, or painful, but always consolation, repose, and honour." On receiving his commands that she should join him, she writes of the ecstasy she experiences: "Monseigneur, if you could but experience a little of the joy you have given me by the command to hasten to a place which contains all I love most on earth."

There is no reason to suppose that these expressions of devotion, however extravagant, were insincere. By every action of her life, as well as by words, Margaret showed her absolute worship of her brother. He was her all in all, her sun, her

divinity. Judge then what she and her mother must have suffered when their "glorious and triumphant Cæsar" was glorious and triumphant no longer; when the second Italian campaign was one long disaster, Francis himself a prisoner, and the flower of the French nobility slain at the battle of Pavia in 1525. When this expedition had set out, Louise had been left regent, and it required all her skill and statesmanship to sustain the integrity of the kingdom under the blow which it had received. Louise had never thought well of this Italian expedition, and had endeavoured to dissuade Francis from undertaking it. She was too devoted to him to remind him of this in his hour of defeat. The bitter rage and grief throughout France was deepened by the knowledge that it had been brought about by the treachery of a Frenchman, and that Frenchman the first nobleman in the kingdom, a grandson by marriage of Louis XI., Charles of Montpensier, Duke of Bourbon, and Constable of France.

The Montpensier story is a romance in itself. He was the equal and friend of princes. His annual revenues are said to have amounted to nearly a million livres, and his power and wealth nearly equalled those of the king. His estates had been increased by his marriage when a mere child, in 1504, with Susanne of Bourbon, daughter of Anne of Beaujeu, and granddaughter of Louis XI. His appearance and demeanour at the Field of the Cloth

of Gold, in 1520, were so magnificent and haughty that Henry VIII. had said, "If that man were lord of mine, his head should not remain two days upon his shoulders." It will be remembered that he was one of the little group of noble youths brought up with Francis and Margaret in their childhood. He was therefore intimately known by them and by Louise. This marriage with the heiress of the Bourbons did not prevent his carrying on a rather nauseous flirtation with Louise, who was thirteen years his senior. It is understood that there was an exchange of rings and a promise of marriage as soon as Susanne, who was delicate and deformed, should have departed from this world. It was partly through the influence of Louise that Montpensier had been made Constable by Louis XII. in 1513. Later he became Governor of Milan. Louise, with the infatuation sometimes seen in a middle-aged woman for a young lover, intrigued to secure his recall; and his ambition thus received from her hand a blow for which he never forgave her. When Susanne died in 1522, instead, as Louise had expected, of offering her his hand, he made a formal application to the King for the hand of his sister-in-law Renée, afterwards Duchess of Ferrara. At first Louise gave no heed to the defection of her former lover; and at her request Francis sent a messenger to the Constable to acquaint him that the King designed to bestow upon him his mother in marriage.

Montpensier declined point blank, and said he would not marry Louise for all the riches in Christendom. He added insult to injury by saying that his former court to her was but a feint to cover his real love for her daughter Margaret. The rage of Louise knew no bounds. She was now as keen to ruin Montpensier, financially and politically, as she had previously been to advance him. She induced the King to deprive him of the military command of the van of the French army, a post most unwisely bestowed upon the incompetent Alençon; and as if this was not enough, she began a lawsuit to deprive him of the great Bourbon estates which he had inherited from his wife. She left no stone unturned. The law was against her and in favour of Montpensier. She must have the law altered, and she actually got it altered, Duprat, the chancellor, aiding her in this iniquity. She worked so indefatigably that the lawsuit ended in adjudging the property to the crown, and Francis bestowed it upon his mother. Montpensier went into rebellion, opened negotiations with Charles V., in conjunction with whom he besieged Marseilles, but was repulsed by the valour of the citizens, the very women working in the trenches. He visited England in order to pay court to another enemy of Francis. Sir Thomas Boleyn wrote of him, "The Constable has, according to his own showing, the noblest motives for his desertion of his country." Whether this were sarcasm or not

does not appear; but deserters of their country had need to have "noblest motives" in order to cover their treachery. He seems to have been continually trying to arrange some magnificent marriage for himself with an emperor's sister or a king's daughter, but none of these schemes succeeded. How Montpensier's conduct was regarded can be judged by the fact that after Pavia, in 1525, when Montpensier was in Spain, the Spanish grandees refused to receive him, and he had much difficulty in securing a house in Madrid suitable to his rank. Charles V. made it a personal request to the Marquis of Villana that he would allow Montpensier to inhabit his palace. The Marquis replied that the wish of the Emperor was a command, and that his palace was at the service of the Duke; but, he added, "when he quits it I will have it burned to the ground, as a house polluted by the presence of a traitor is no fit abode for a man of honour." This is Brantôme's story, and it must be remembered that he was always a thick and thin supporter of the House of Valois.

Treachery remains treachery, and disloyalty disloyalty. But Montpensier had great provocations. He had been the richest and most powerful nobleman in France; and he was now ruined, deprived of his command, despoiled of his estates, the law juggled with in order to make it an instrument against him, all to satisfy the wounded vanity of an

unprincipled woman whose so-called love had turned to hate. If he had remained on what was left to him of his hereditary estates, and had abstained from allying himself with the enemies of his country, no one can say what his position might have become; but as a Frenchman who fought against France, his infamy vies with that of the woman who provoked it. Fortunately for himself he did not live long. At the sack of Rome, in 1527, he raised with his own hands the first scaling ladder upon the walls; he was also the first to mount the breach, and the first to fall mortally wounded, shot through the lungs by Benvenuto Cellini.

As the traitor Montpensier was conspicuous among the victorious enemies of Francis at Pavia, so the incompetent Alençon was conspicuous among those of his friends who left undone what they ought to have done. Immense numbers of leaders, as well as the best of the rank and file of the French army, were slain on that disastrous day; the rout and panic were complete. The Duke of Alençon had saved himself by flight while the fate of the battle still hung in the balance. Francis was wounded, his horse slain under him, and he himself only saved by the intervention of an equerry of Montpensier, who flew to his rescue and proclaimed to the victorious soldiers of Charles that it was the King. The equerry desired that Francis should yield his sword to his master. But this was a humiliation greater



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LOUISE OF SAVOY, COMTESSE D'ANGOULÊME

than Francis could endure, and he replied that he would only give up his sword to the Marquis of Lannoy, the generalissimo of the Imperial troops. After his surrender Francis was taken at his own request into the famous church of the Certosa near Pavia, built by Ludovico il Moro. On entering, the first words which met his eye were, "It is good for me, Lord, that I have been in trouble, that I may learn thy statutes." In his letter to his mother announcing the disaster, he made use of the phrase which has become proverbial, "All is lost save honour and life, which are safe."

The news of the misfortune was brought to Louise and Margaret at Lyons by Captain Primrose. They rose to what the occasion demanded, and showed inflexible courage, resource, and capacity to meet misfortune and defy it. In such moments even Louise showed herself great and admirable. Crushed as she was, she did not more than temporarily give herself over to despair nor to the vain repetition, in which a feebler spirit would have sought consolation, of such expressions as, "If he would only have listened to me," and so forth. Sustained by her daughter, she set herself to preserve for her adored sovereign all that was left to him of his kingdom, and to retrieve the disasters which had overwhelmed it.

In their first letter to Francis after the news of the defeat, his mother and sister give the foremost

place to the inexpressible comfort they derive from knowing that his honour, life, and health are safe. They then add :

“ Monseigneur, hearing these things, and that it is your intention to endure with resignation the ills that God has inflicted upon you, I, for my part, likewise promise to bear this reverse as you hope and desire, in such fashion, for the aid of your little children and the affairs of this kingdom, that I will not be the occasion of greater grief to you. I beseech God, Monseigneur, to have you in His holy keeping, as prays with all her heart; your very humble and good mother and subject, Loyse; your very humble sister, Marguerite.”

In another letter to her brother, Margaret wrote : “ Madame (Louise of Savoy) has felt such a doubling of strength that night and day there is not a moment lost for your affairs, therefore you need have no anxiety or pain about your kingdom or your children.”

The imperturbable courage and good sense of these letters stir the blood even now, after nearly four hundred years. Each woman was enduring, besides the general grief of the whole nation, “ a fee-grief due to her single breast.” Louise must have known that she was the real cause of Montpensier’s disloyalty. Margaret had to face the horrid truth that a large share of the disaster was due to the incompetence and cowardice of her husband.

She made no attempt to conceal the bitter anger she felt against him. That he should have been entrusted with the most important command and should have betrayed it was to her anguish worse than death. Pavia had been fought on February 24th, the birthday of Charles V. Alençon arrived in Lyons at the end of March. In every French hamlet he had passed through he had heard his name repeated with every sort of insult and contempt. He and his troops were greeted as "*les fuyards de Pavie*." In innumerable ballads sung in town and village he heard what his countrymen thought of him. Rabelais wrote, "I hate more than poison a man who flies when sword play comes into fashion. Why am I not King of France for eighty or a hundred years? My God! I would crop the tails of the curs who fled from Pavia." When at last Alençon reached Lyons, his wife refused to see him. Ill already, this was the last straw; he took to his bed stricken to death. One is thankful to learn that Margaret relented towards him before it was too late. When she heard that mortal illness was upon him, she visited him and did her utmost to obtain his pardon from the Regent, her mother, and also from Francis himself. In a letter to her brother she entreated him to "receive the very humble homage of Monseigneur d'Alençon, who esteems his captive freedom so great a misfortune that until he sees you again he holds his life to be as death."

Alençon died on April 11th, 1526, less than seven weeks after the disastrous day of Pavia. It was Tuesday in Passion week. Margaret had been tending him for several days; early in the morning she had urged him to take the sacrament, and she afterwards read to him the chapters of the Gospel which narrate the passion and death of Our Lord. Moved thereto no doubt by her daughter, Louise also visited the dying man, whose first thoughts on seeing her were another endeavour to make his peace with Francis. When Louise withdrew, and signed to Margaret to follow her, the Duke grasped his wife's hand and said, "Do not leave me." She remained with him to the end. In her letters to Francis she speaks of herself as overwhelmed by grief. "Those first two days," she said, "made me forget all reason." And no doubt her feelings were a medley of shame, pity, and sorrow, perhaps also of remorse. Could she not have made something better of the man she had married if she had been able to give to him even a faint shadow of the devoted affection which she lavished on her brother? The human soul thrives on love, and poor Alençon had had none of it, even in the relation in which it is most essential. If she had cared for him even enough to try to understand him, she might have prevented him from assuming the military command for which he was wholly unfitted, his failure in which resulted in the rout of Pavia, the imprisonment of Francis,





ERASMUS.

FROM THE PORTRAIT BY HOLBEIN, IN THE ANTWERP GALLERY.

Photograph by Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode.

and his own broken-hearted death. Thus her exclusive devotion to her brother had defeated its own ends.

Margaret did not keep the six weeks' seclusion in a darkened room which was then, in royal circles, one of the penalties of being a widow. Even the robust hypocrisy of the sixteenth century did not exact that farce from her.

Her own thoughts and those of her mother were now concentrated on what they could do to secure the release of Francis. The learned men of Europe petitioned Charles V. to set his captive free. Francis, through Margaret, had been the patron of learning, and every scholar deprecated the harshness with which he was being treated. Before the existence of the newspaper press, these cosmopolitan scholars represented public opinion, and often led it. One of the noblest of the letters was that written by Erasmus, and it came with all the greater weight because it was addressed by a subject to his sovereign. It is curiously modern in tone. It might almost have been written by Tolstoi.

"If I were the Emperor," wrote Erasmus to Charles V., "I should say to the King of France: 'My brother, some evil fate has provoked us to war. Fortune has made you my prisoner; but that which has happened to you might also have happened to me. . . . We have been too long at war together; let us now combat after another

fashion. I restore you to liberty—in return grant me your friendship; let us forget the past. I ask you for no ransom; let us live as good neighbours. . . . My clemency will confer greater honour upon me than if I had conquered France; and your gratitude will be more glorious to you than if you had driven me from Italy.' ”

But neither his Catholic Majesty nor the Most Christian King understood this sort of Christianity which found its mouthpiece in the heretic Erasmus, whom the Inquisition would have cheerfully burned if it could have caught him in its power.

Meanwhile letters constantly passed between Francis and Margaret. His are full of requests—for the silver equipage of his table, for money, and so forth; hers are full of her anxieties on his behalf; she was much troubled lest he should injure his health by fasting. “Monsieur, as much as a very humble sister can implore you, I entreat you not to do this, but consider how fish goes against you; also believe that if you do it Madame has sworn to do so too, and I shall have the sorrow to see you both give way.” Let us hope she was cheered on hearing that the King was “fasting on turtles this Lent, which he finds very good.”

She sent him the Epistles of St. Paul with a special message to Montmorency that if the King will be pleased to read one of them daily “as a prayer . . . God for His own honour and glory

will give him speedy deliverance; for He has promised in His holy Gospel that those who love the truth, by truth they shall be free." A curious example that even the piety and intelligence of Margaret could use the Bible as a sort of charm, and could, when she wished it, impart an entirely unjustified and materialistic interpretation to a well-known text.

In the meantime Charles V. remained deaf to the entreaties of Erasmus and the other learned men. He retained Francis as his prisoner, and removed him from Italy to Spain, whence Louise and Margaret heard terrible reports of the severity of his confinement. Their pleasure-loving, joyous Francis, who demanded, above all things, brilliancy, splendour, and gaiety, was now shut up in a narrow, airless chamber in the Castle of Madrid. The window, doubly barred by iron grilles deeply imbedded in the wall, was a hundred feet from the ground, and two battalions of soldiers kept guard night and day on the platform below. The King was permitted no privacy, and no personal communication with his captor was vouchsafed. His hours of exercise were strictly limited; no horse was allowed him; when he went abroad he was mounted on a mule and surrounded by an armed escort, who were commanded never to break their ranks.

Half the ladies in Spain, from the Emperor's sister downwards, were in love with him, but they

could not charm away his captivity or soften its rigours. He became seriously ill, and Louise and Margaret were persuaded that the personal presence of Margaret herself in Madrid would effect upon the resolution of Charles what all other ambassadors had entreated in vain. Louise did not part from her daughter without grave misgivings. What if Margaret became a prisoner too? The first thing necessary was to obtain a safe-conduct for her from the Emperor. This was at length promised, and Margaret set forth, in August, 1525, amid a general lamentation for her absence, and devout hopes for her safe return and for the success of her mission. Among those who most deplored her departure were the Reformers. The severity of the persecution inaugurated by Louise for the purpose of propitiating the wrath of Heaven for the sin of heresy, would, they were aware, be aggravated by the absence of the Duchess of Alençon.

But all doubts and fears had to give way to Margaret's own intense wish to join her brother. Louise accompanied her on her journey for five days, sailing in a barge down the Rhone from Lyons to Aigues Mortes. Margaret was kept waiting there for fourteen days for the arrival of the promised safe-conduct. When it at last arrived she departed by sea to Barcelona. She had a rough passage, but did not suffer from sea-sickness. She attributed her immunity to her absorption in her approaching meeting

with Francis. She wrote to her brother, "The extreme desire I have to see your Majesty absorbed all other pains."

Until the arrival of Margaret in Spain, Charles V. had always evaded, under a variety of pretexts, the desire of Francis for a personal interview. When Margaret was almost at the gates of his capital, Charles felt that he could postpone the promised visit no longer, and he resolved to see Francis before the arrival of his sister; and on September 18th, 1525, at eight o'clock in the evening, the visit took place. Francis was in bed, and was too weak to rise; Charles was startled and alarmed. His prisoner's life was essential to him, for death sets every man free. They were both young men—Charles only twenty-five, and Francis thirty-one. It may be hoped that there was some touch of genuine generosity in Charles's concern for the well-being of the King. Francis exclaimed that Charles had come to see his prisoner die, and Charles rejoined, "You are not my prisoner, but my brother and my friend. I have no other wish than to give you liberty with all the satisfaction you can desire." The interview lasted about half an hour, and the personal charm of Francis made a decided impression on the younger man, who departed with many assurances of good feeling and of his desire that the forthcoming negotiations with Madame la Duchesse d'Alençon would lead to the speedy release of Francis.

The next day, September 19th, Margaret made her entry into Madrid. She was attired very simply, as a widow, in deep black, with a long white veil, and wore no jewels. The grace, dignity, and simplicity of her appearance produced a deep impression upon the solemnity-loving Spaniards. The Emperor also appears to have been favourably impressed, but he was more of a Fleming than a Spaniard, and was capable of pursuing a fixed purpose quite regardless of the passing emotions of the hour. The task Margaret had undertaken was not rendered easier by her mother having offered her in marriage to Charles V. almost before the grave had closed on poor d'Alençon. Nothing came of the offer, which seems to have been disregarded from the outset. Charles was, in fact, on the point of marriage with his sister's step-daughter Isabella, Infanta of Portugal. Margaret now found herself in the presence of a character such as hitherto she had never met with. Slow, deliberate, obstinate, tenacious, without brilliancy or imagination, Charles was a new phenomenon in her life. She had been accustomed to carry everything before her with her winning grace and charm. She now found her way barred by the granite wall of Charles's will. It was not that he was deaf to her eloquence, insensible to her charm, or blind to her beauty. He said he had not thought it possible a woman could speak so well. He greatly admired her dignity and beauty, but he



CHARLES V.

FROM THE PAINTING BY HOLBEIN.



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held on with bull-dog tenacity to what he wanted, and to his power, through the imprisonment of Francis, to exact it.

The prolonged humiliation of her sojourn in Spain, its ultimate failure in securing the release of her brother, her powerlessness to move the Emperor one hair's-breadth from the path of his own interest, left a bitterness towards him in Margaret's mind which she never showed to any other human being. From that time she hated Charles V., and never forgot her hatred. Even after long years, when an apparent reconciliation had been effected between the Sovereigns, and the Emperor visited the King of France at Villeneuve, Margaret, although she accompanied her brother, refused to see Charles. On another occasion, when Charles passed through France on his way from Spain to the Netherlands, Margaret did not avoid seeing him, but she did not fail to render him uncomfortable and ill at ease, twitting him by contrasting the courtesy of his reception with the harsh treatment she and Francis had received at Madrid.

When Margaret first visited Francis in his prison he was so seriously ill that even his sister's presence failed to rouse him. His life was despaired of; the last sacrament was administered, and from that hour he began to amend. A miracle was claimed by the pious, and it was said that the consecrated wafer arrested Francis on the road to death and set his face

once more towards life and health. Francis himself, however, always averred that his sister saved his life by her devotion and care. As Brantôme says: "In so piteous a state did she find her brother that had she not arrived he was a dead man; for she understood his temperament and complexion better than all his physicians, and caused him to be so well treated according to her own knowledge that he was speedily cured."

The great difficulty in securing the release of Francis was to arrive at terms to which both he and Charles could consent. What Charles demanded, the cession of French territory, Francis swore he would never grant. The firmness of Charles suffered a shock from the illness of Francis. If the King of France died, the very ground of Charles's exactions ceased to exist. But with the King's recovery Charles's demands recovered too. Margaret advised her brother to remain in feeble health as long as possible. Writing from Toledo, where she had followed Charles, she says, "I beseech you, Monseigneur, affect a feeble and ailing deportment while in the presence of *Sieur Alarçon* [the governor of the prison] as your weakness will hasten my negotiation." In this and other letters she frequently refers to herself as her brother's "little hand," his "great hand" being Montmorency.

But this plan of feigning illness could not serve their turn permanently. An escape was planned,

but failed ; its only result being to deepen the anger and suspicion of Charles. It was then that Margaret had the thought, and pressed it on her brother with all her eloquence, that there was a way of getting the better of his opponent short of death, and that was by abdication. If Francis abdicated, his son would reign in his stead, and Charles would no longer be in possession of the person of the reigning sovereign of France. Letters patent were actually drawn conferring the throne upon the Dauphin, with Louise as Regent and guardian of the royal children ; in the event of the death of Louise while the Dauphin was still a minor, her authority was to be transferred to " our very dear and very beloved sister, Margaret of France, Duchess of Alençon and of Berry." This deed of abdication was entrusted to Montmorency for transmission to Paris. A copy was allowed to come under the eye of Charles. He was in consternation. But the danger was not as great as he feared. Francis had been worked upon by the enthusiastic spirit of Margaret to consent to abdication, and actually to sign the deed and despatch it to Paris ; but it contained a clause which made it meaningless, namely, that it should be null and void if and when he regained his liberty. Francis had nothing of the martyr in his composition, and had no notion of spending the rest of his life in prison, and Charles discovered that his prisoner was as anxious as ever to come to terms.

Internal troubles in France encouraged Charles to abate none of his demands. Margaret had audiences of him, and likewise pleaded her brother's cause before the Spanish Council. The terms finally arranged were :—

1. A marriage between Francis and the Emperor's sister, Eleanor, Queen Dowager of Portugal.
2. The renunciation by Francis of all rights over Milan, Naples, Genoa, and Asti, together with the suzerainty over Flanders, Artois, and Tournay.
3. The cession of the Duchy of Burgundy.
4. Montpensier to be pardoned and his estates restored to him.

As a guarantee for the fulfilment of the terms, the King's two elder sons were to be given up as hostages, and Francis himself was to return and give himself up as a prisoner in the event of the non-fulfilment of the treaty.* The utmost result of Margaret's diplomacy was to include in the terms the marriage of Francis and Eleanor. At first Charles held out against the marriage of his sister to Francis, and declared that he had promised her hand to Montpensier. But Eleanor herself had something to say to this, and positively declined the match. She had been won by Margaret's glowing

* "Cambridge Modern History," Vol. II, p. 51.

descriptions of her brother, and was in love with Francis without ever having seen him. More so than she was, or had cause to be, poor lady, after she had married him. Francis treated both his wives with persistent neglect, and Eleanor of Portugal, in particular, with cold unfriendliness. She became his official wife and Queen of France, but nothing more.

Before the treaty was ready for signature, Margaret had been obliged to leave her brother. Her safe-conduct was only good for four months, and expired on the last day of 1525. The time had nearly run out. Her experience of Charles did not lead her to place any confidence in his generosity. Francis even urged her to leave him. Brantôme says that the Emperor "meant to play her a trick, because not reflecting on the expiration of her safe-conduct and passport, she took no heed that the time was elapsing. But getting wind that the Emperor meant to arrest her, she, always courageous, mounted her horse and rode in eight days a distance which should have taken fifteen; which effort so well succeeded that she reached the frontier of France very late in the evening of the day her passport expired, thus circumventing his Imperial Majesty. . . . I heard this tale from Mme. la Seneschale, my grandmother, who was with her at that time as lady of honour."

Like other tales, however, this one had lost

nothing in the telling. Margaret had an adventurous ride from Toledo to the French frontier. She rode through the Pyrenees in December, and was often in the saddle from 6 a.m. till nightfall. But she reached the little frontier town of Salses with ten days to spare. The reason for her haste was that her safe-conduct was so worded that it became invalid if the person in whose favour it was drawn committed any act prejudicial to the Emperor, his subjects, or his dominions. It was hinted to Margaret that Charles might forfeit her safe-conduct on account of the help she had given her brother in his unsuccessful attempt at escape. Hence her romantic gallop across Spain in mid-winter. She was received with unbounded enthusiasm in France, which she found desolate for the loss of its king; a body without a head. She wrote to Francis that she had been received as a forerunner of himself, as the Baptist was of Jesus Christ.

Her journey never interfered with her innumerable letters to her brother. Louise, with her usual unscrupulousness, had previously written to Francis advising him to agree to all that Charles demanded, and to break his word as soon as he was free. Margaret at first gave better advice. She counselled her brother to stand firm. She was hoping for help both from Italy and England. Patience and delay, she urged, would be followed by changes favourable to Francis. But before she left Spain

she also wrote to her brother advising him to consent to everything—"that compact cannot be bad which restores you to France, neither can any be good while you are detained in Madrid. . . . Seeing how indispensable your presence is to your friends, and how little impression your prolonged prison makes on your enemies, I do not fear to trouble you with this long letter to implore you to consent to whatever they may please to propose." She does not say in so many words "promise everything and break your word as soon as you are free," but it can hardly be doubted that her letter was intended to have this meaning read into it. Francis was nothing loth. When his better self urged him to promise everything, and to get free at all costs, he was not likely to set up a stricter standard of honour. So the treaty of Madrid was signed by the French ambassadors in Spain before Margaret was out of the country, on December 19th, 1525. It required the ratification of Francis, which was postponed until January 14th. Before putting his signature to the treaty, Francis assembled his counsellors in his prison chamber and told them that he did not mean to keep his word. He had, indeed, signed away half his dominions. Some rumour of what Francis intended must have reached the ears of Charles, for he did what was very unusual. According to Spanish historians, at the final parting with Francis, after all the kissing and

compliments were over, the Emperor suddenly turned to his former prisoner and said, "We have hitherto treated together as princes. Let us now speak as man to man. Confess to me on the faith and honour of a gentleman, is it your intention to execute our treaty?" They were standing in the open roadway near a crucifix, and Francis looking at it took a solemn oath as a gentleman faithfully to execute the treaty. "Then," continued the Emperor, with his usual dogged persistency, "if you fail to do so, I may say that you have been false to your honour as a gentleman as well as to your treaty as a king." "You may," rejoined Francis. This was on February 19th, 1526.

Francis was royally entertained by the Spanish nobles on his progress towards the French frontier at Fontarabia, where the exchange of his person for that of the two little princes had been arranged. He did not reach the appointed place till March 16th. The ceremony was fixed for the 17th: a barge was moored in the middle of the little river Bidassoa, and the King, accompanied by his former gaoler and an armed escort rowed to it from the Spanish side, while his two little boys, also guarded by Spanish soldiers, were rowed to it from the French side. Francis was not allowed even to embrace his children; but he was too full of glee at his recovered liberty to make much trouble of this. The Dauphin was not to him what he had ever been

to Louise, "My Lord, my King, my Cæsar, and my son." No sooner did his feet touch French soil than he leapt on a swift horse, and waving his hat with the shout, "Once more a king," he galloped away for St. Jean de Luz.* All France went mad with joy. The churches were filled with people singing "Te Deums." Margaret and Louise were at the height of bliss. Margaret in her poetical way said that the sun had arisen again and caused all nature to revive; no one seems to have been disturbed by anxieties about the little princes. Francis distributed honours and rewards to all who had faithfully served him during his captivity. His mother was always to have her seat at his council table. Margaret was made, in addition to her other dignities, Countess of Armagnac in her own right.

Charles soon began to press Francis for the fulfilment of the Treaty of Madrid, and the language of Francis on the subject left no doubt as to his intention of breaking his word. "A captive in bondage," he said, "has no honour, and can bind himself to nothing." He said he could not give up Burgundy without the consent of the estates of the province,

* The menu of a "hasty meal" prepared for the King at this place suggests that imprisonment had not impaired his appetite. Among other dishes the following were provided:—200 oysters, nine lampreys, nine lbs. of turtle, eighteen roach, forty-five mullets, six plaice, two cod-fish, two salmon, besides pike, chad, herrings, and barbels. There were also a sturgeon pie, an apple pasty, custards, fruits, six lbs. of white sugar, and eight gallons of claret.

and this consent was, of course, withheld. He reproached Charles, through his ambassador, with the ungenerous treatment he had received as a prisoner, and contrasted it with the chivalrous conduct of the English Black Prince when John, King of France, was his prisoner in London. He also complained of the discourtesy shown to Margaret during her sojourn in Spain. He was using all his diplomacy to create a combination, called the Holy League, between France, England, Switzerland, the Pope, Florence, Venice, and the Duke of Milan, against Charles. In order to secure the friendship of Henry VIII., Francis offered him the hand of his sister Margaret in marriage and his aid with the Pope in securing his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, the aunt of Charles. Margaret had every reason to object to this arrangement. She was in love with the King of Navarre, and she had a keen feeling of respect and sympathy for Catherine; but she did not dare to oppose her brother openly; her portrait in her becoming widow's dress was sent "on approval" to Hampton Court. She was saved from the match she disliked more by Anne Boleyn than by herself.

As months, and even years, passed on, and Francis did nothing in the direction of the fulfilment of the treaty, Charles became more and more enraged. The treatment of the little princes, which at first had been sufficiently liberal, became harsh

and severe. All their French attendants were dismissed, and they were shut up in a dismal room lighted only by one small window eighteen inches square. Francis endeavoured to negotiate their ransom, but Charles doggedly replied that it was not ransom he wanted, but the fulfilment of the treaty; and in default that Francis should keep his word and give himself up again as a prisoner. With scorching words Charles addressed the messenger of Francis on what he thought of "the hero so jealous of his glory, the cavalier who considers the maxims of honour as sacred and inviolable . . . who basely and treacherously had broken every condition to which he had agreed while a prisoner." On these words being repeated to Francis he thought it incumbent on him as a gentleman and man of honour, not to keep his word, but to challenge Charles to single combat. To the astonishment and confusion of Francis, Charles accepted the challenge. The King's council were unanimous in declaring that the duel could never be allowed to take place; but now it rested with Francis, who had sent the challenge, to back out of it. An excuse was made that the rules of heraldry had not been duly observed by Charles and his representative in their method of accepting the challenge. This absurd and undignified incident was brought to an end in September, 1528. There can be little doubt that Charles seriously wished to fight; he asked Cas-

tiglione, the author of "Il Cortegiano," to be one of his seconds. The part of Francis in the matter was probably mere play-acting throughout.

It was not till 1530 that the young princes were ransomed after four years' captivity, and then, as already related, an attempt was made to pay their ransom in debased coin. For a king who prided himself on being before all things a perfect gentleman and man of honour this is hard to beat. Francis, in the whole of his negotiations with Charles, showed himself mean and treacherous to the last degree, and yet we read in the very historian who sets forth the details of the foregoing narrative, that whatever may have been his faults, "he never deviated from the refinement and courtesy of the perfect gentleman."

QUEEN OF NAVARRE.

When Margaret left Spain and rejoined her mother at Lyons, at the end of the year 1525, she almost immediately made the acquaintance of Henry d'Albret, the young King of Navarre. He had been with Francis at Pavia, had fought by his side, and had shared his fate, having been both wounded and a prisoner. He was handsome and winsome, brave and strong; his servants all worshipped him. He had been imprisoned in the Castle of Pavia; but no castle could hold him. Bribes to guards, a devoted page with whom he ex-

changed clothes, a dash through the guardroom, a rope ladder, a fearful leap, a swift horse, and Henry of Navarre was galloping towards Lyons on the way to liberty and the court of Louise of Savoy. Charles V., when he met him a few years later, said, "I have only met one man in France, and that man is the King of Navarre." When he and Margaret met, in 1525, he was twenty-two and she was thirty-three. He fell in love with her; but as he fell in love with every handsome and agreeable woman between sixteen and sixty whom he ever met, there was nothing singular in this; it was of more importance that she fell in love with him. There was almost everything in him to attract her: his devotion to Francis, his romantic escape from prison, his interest in learning, his sympathy with the Reformation, and his lively desire to improve the condition of the little mountain province which called him King. He would remit taxation, found libraries and printing presses, reform the laws, establish manufactures, improve the breed of cattle, and develop agriculture. He must have been a most attractive lad, with his vivacious Southern blood and overflowing vitality and his devotion to Margaret which, she did not then know, had no trace of exclusiveness about it. She had, as we have seen, some serious opposition to her marriage to overcome. Francis had other designs for her, but these designs for one reason or another were abandoned,

and Margaret married the man she loved about a year after the release of Francis, in January, 1527.

We have seen how tenderly she loved her brother's children. One of her most charming letters to Francis during his captivity describes their illness and recovery from measles.

"They are all quite cured now," she writes, "and very healthy. M. le Dauphin does marvels, mingling with his studies a hundred other exercises; there is no question now of temper, but of all the virtues. M. d'Orleans [afterwards Henry II.] is nailed to his book, and says he wants to be wise; but M. d'Angoulême [aged four] knows more than the others, and does and says things wonderful for his age, rather than childish prattle which, monseigneur, you would be amazed to hear of. Little Margot [afterwards Duchess of Savoy] is growing like me; she also follows my example, and always refuses to be ill. They tell me here that she has very good grace, and is growing much handsomer than Mademoiselle d'Angoulême [herself] ever was."

How strange that this perfect aunt should have been anything but a perfect mother. Her slavish devotion to Francis was answerable in the main for both perfection and imperfection. Her first child, Jeanne, was born at Fontainebleau in January, 1528. Her letter to Francis saying that she cannot believe that her child will presume to be born without his command is quoted on another page. She

refers to a long letter she had received from Francis, and says she will cause it to be read to her, instead of the "Life of St. Margaret," when the pains of childbirth assail her. After the birth of the baby it was almost immediately put under the care of Madame de Silly, Baillive of Caen; at two years old Jeanne was parted from her mother completely, and shut up by Francis in the gloomy fortress palace of Plessis-les-Tours, from which her parents were not allowed to remove her. Francis dreaded that Henry d'Albret, Jeanne's father, if he had control of her person, would betrothe her to Philip, Prince of Spain, the son of Charles V.

Poor little Jeanne never received a mother's tenderness. Once, when she was about nine years old, she had a dangerous illness, and Margaret, on hearing of it, announced her intention of visiting her daughter, and this she did, setting out without an hour's delay, notwithstanding, says the admiring biographer, that it was raining hard. Jeanne recovered, and was already out of danger when her mother arrived. The illness procured for the child the extraordinary indulgence of a visit from her mother which lasted nearly a fortnight. Margaret's cruelty in forcing Jeanne, by repeated whippings, to marry the Duke of Cleves, has been already referred to. It is not surprising that Jeanne did not share in the enthusiastic adoration which her mother inspired in other quarters. She was too proud to

tell lies and to pretend what she did not feel. Her chief feeling in regard to her mother, in after years, was a resolve to see justice done to Margaret's literary position. When she was Queen of Navarre in her own right, she collected the MSS. of Margaret's poems and stored them in an iron chest, which was discovered not very many years ago in Paris. When, nineteen years after the death of Margaret, a literary pirate brought out her collection of stories called "The Heptameron" as his own, Jeanne came to the rescue, and caused the production of a new edition, in which her mother's name as the author was restored to its rightful place.

Jeanne's was not a cold nature, and if she did not give Margaret her love it was because her mother had never earned it.

Margaret had little happiness as a mother. What she might have had she neglected, and her other children died in infancy. A boy was born on Christmas Day, 1530, but only lived for five months; she had twins twelve years later, who hardly survived their birth. Margaret's grief for the death of her son was vehement and lasting. But she tried to submit herself to her sorrow. The death of the prince was announced with the words, "The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away," and she tried to persuade herself, by having a "Te Deum" chanted, that she was thankful that her little boy had been removed from the trials and

dangers of this world. Francis was at his best when his affections were really touched, and his letter to Margaret on the death of her son shows genuine feeling. He reminds her of her sympathy with him when he lost two children, and says that as all that is his is also hers, so hers is his; her sorrow for this child is his, and he accounts the little prince just dead as the third of his own, whom God had called to join the glorious company above. "My darling," he writes, "wipe away your bitter tears; render obedience to God"; and he counsels her to try to seek relief from her sad thoughts by attendance on their mother, who was then lying very ill at Fontainebleau.

The last signal service which Louise was able to render her son was the conclusion of the treaty with Charles V., at Cambray, in August, 1529. The negotiations were conducted on both sides by ladies, and it was hence called "The Ladies' Peace." Louise, Duchess of Angoulême, accompanied by the King and Queen of Navarre, represented Francis, while Charles V. was represented by his aunt, the Archduchess Margaret of Austria, Governess of the Netherlands. It was then that the project of marriage between Francis and Eleanor of Portugal was reopened, and the money ransom of the young princes promised in lieu of the cession of Burgundy; it was, however, stipulated that if the marriage of Francis and Eleanor resulted in

the birth of a son, he should succeed to Burgundy to the exclusion of the sons of Francis by his first wife. Francis once more, as in the Treaty of Madrid, renounced all his pretensions in Italy, and his suzerainty over Flanders and Artois; but he retained the disputed possessions of Bourbon. Peace on almost any conditions was welcome to both countries; but the terms, as compared with the Treaty of Madrid, were favourable to France.

The young princes and Eleanor of Portugal arrived at Fontarabia in March, 1530, but were kept waiting on the Spanish side of the river for four months owing to the chicanery already related of the representatives of Francis in trying to pay the ransom in debased coin. When once this untoward incident had been dealt with to the satisfaction of the Spaniards, the crossing of the river by the Queen and her two future stepsons was conducted with great splendour and gorgeous ceremonial. Their reception on the French side of the river left nothing to be desired. The actual landing of the Queen of Portugal was on territory within the little kingdom of Navarre, but the King and Queen of Navarre were not there to welcome her. Margaret was at Blois awaiting the birth of her second child, and the King of Navarre was in attendance on Francis. Louise was also absent. She was ill, and it may be hoped that she was ashamed, with that million and a half of gold crowns in her

cash box, that she had contributed nothing to the two millions required for the ransom of her grandsons. Francis met his bride near the Abbey of Captieux, and the marriage ceremony was performed there. Francis treated his new wife with coldness and aversion from the first. He cordially hated Charles V., and as Eleanor of Portugal was his sister, and in a sense his representative, some of the detestation he aroused in Francis was transferred to her. The insolence of Francis in making his mistress, Mademoiselle de Heilly, afterwards Duchess d'Estampes, one of the Queen's ladies of honour from the day of her arrival in France was resented by Eleanor, but not resisted. She bore the insult with gloomy dignity; then Francis complained of her that she was not sprightly and cheerful.

Margaret, while at Blois, wrote almost daily to Montmorency, who was now grand master of the household, to prefer requests for posts and appointments for one or other of her numerous clients and dependants. From the husband of the washerwoman of the late Queen Claude to men who aspired to be treasurer, or governor to the princes, she had protégés in every rank, and was never weary of trying to secure good appointments for them. It was doubtless owing to her that one of the most learned of the French Reformers, Lefèvre, was appointed tutor to the King's youngest son, Margaret's pet, "M. d'Angoulême." Her benevo-

lence was no mere gratification of a good-natured impulse at the expense of someone else. Lefèvre, for instance, she surrounded with every sort of personal kindness to the end of his long life. When he had to relinquish his tutorship to the little prince, she received him as her librarian at Blois; when the fires of persecution waxed hotter, and he was no longer safe in France, she made a home for him in her own home, first at Nérac, then at Pau. He lived to be a hundred and one, but Margaret's hospitality never wearied. She delighted in his conversation and in the simplicity and purity of his character. He said to Margaret a few hours before his death that now, when he was on the point of quitting this world, he could not remember any sin which lay upon his conscience, except that he had fled from persecution, when so many others had stayed and suffered death. Margaret consoled him with wise and gentle words, so that he presently said, "There is nothing left to me to do but to go to my God Whom I hear calling me." He then gave directions about the disposal of his property, leaving his books to Roussel, and to Margaret "the trouble of distributing my possessions among the poor." Afterwards he fell asleep, and sleeping died. He was buried in the Cathedral of Lescar, and his Queen was his chief mourner.

The death of Louise, which took place in 1531, was quite of another kind. Margaret's letters from

1525-31 contain frequent allusions to her mother's bad health. She was not old, being only fifty-five at the time of her death, but she had been for years a martyr to gout and allied disorders, and often suffered agonies of pain. No one was allowed to mention the subject of death in her presence. Preachers were warned that if they desired the favour of Madame they must avoid all reference to the unwelcome topic in their sermons. She declared that preachers only brought in the subject of death when they were gravelled for lack of matter, and exclaimed scornfully, "as if everyone did not know that the fate of all is to die." The physicians waiting on her carefully concealed from her the serious nature of her illness, and, indeed, confidently promised her recovery. She arrived at Fontainebleau in June, 1531, restless and wretched in mind and body. Between the paroxysms of the pain which prostrated her, she would assemble poor people "afflicted with grievous wounds, which she dresses with her own hands, in order to try the efficacy of an ointment which she believes possesses singular virtue. "But nothing happens that does not seem to add to her depression," wrote Margaret to her brother, at the same time beseeching him not to let their mother know what she was telling him.

By September Louise was much worse, and had no choice but to take to her bed. It was obvious to everyone that she was dying. But she was

hurried away from Fontainebleau in consequence of the outbreak of the plague there. Margaret said in one of her letters to Montmorency she dared not write to the King, and scarcely to him, fearing her letter might convey infection. It was intended to take Louise to her old home, the dower house at Romorentin, in Berry, where her youth was spent; but she never lived to get there. With the egotism of her time and rank, she saw in the comet of 1531 an omen sent especially to her to warn her of her approaching death. At Grès, a little village near Nemours, she announced to her attendants that she recognised that her end was near. "That is a sign," she said to her women, referring to the comet, "which appears not to warn persons of mean condition: God sends it to admonish us, the great of the earth. Close the window. . . I must prepare myself for death." A day or two later, on September 22nd, 1531, she expired. Her body was buried at St. Denis, but her heart was enclosed in a small leaden coffer and placed in the earth at the foot of the steps of the high altar in *Nôtre Dame*, in Paris. It was found and opened about one hundred and fifty years later; but it was carefully replaced, and it is believed that it still occupies its original position, as there was nothing external to mark the spot or to attract the destructive passions of the revolutionaries or the equally destructive zeal of the "restorers."

It was about this time, when Margaret was in attendance on her sick mother, that she probably composed "The Mirror of a Sinful Soul," published in 1532, a mystical poem which hardly any one in the world could read, let alone write, now. It is difficult to conceive either the opposition or the enthusiastic admiration it aroused. It awakened the unappeasable rage of the Sorbonne, because it contained no mention of the saints nor of purgatory, and hymns to the Virgin were paraphrased to the honour of Jesus. On the other hand, it was greatly prized by the Reformers, and Elizabeth of England, at the age of fifteen, translated it from French to English, the English version being printed in 1548, ten years before she became queen. The year 1533 was an eventful one in many ways. It was the year of the publication of Margaret's poem, and of the attack of the Sorbonne upon her, already narrated. It was the year when for the last time Francis showed himself inclined to be led by his sister to favour the principles of the Reformation. From that year the influence of Margaret wanes, and that of Montmorency and the opponents of reform waxes. It was the year when Nicholas Cop, the rector of the University of Paris, and Calvin had to fly from Paris, and ultimately from France, on account of the Lutheran doctrines contained in the rectorial address delivered before the University by Cop, but composed by Calvin. It was

the year of the marriage of Henry VIII. with Anne Boleyn; and it was the year, too, which marked a decided step taken by Francis to emphasise his alliance with the papacy. He broke his promise to his sister to marry his second son Henry, Duke of Orleans, to her daughter, Jeanne, and married the lad to the Pope's niece, Catherine de Medici.

Henceforward, another influence, more subtle, and infinitely less benign than Margaret's, was working on the plastic nature of Francis. The centre of Margaret's influence became Pau or Nérac, and as time went on she counted for less and less with Francis. Catherine, child as she was (she was only fourteen at the time of her marriage), pursued her way without haste and without rest to her ultimate goal—power. The wife of a second son, and a despised and neglected wife, nothing, at the time of her marriage, seemed less likely than that she would attain the position of supreme authority she afterwards secured. But gradually all obstacles in her path were removed; Francis was dexterously flattered and constantly amused by her; her husband's elder brother died suddenly and mysteriously, whether by her means or by her connivance will never be known, but his death certainly served her interests. She became Dauphine, and her husband next in the succession. She bore her husband ten children, and endured with apparent complacency his devotion to another woman from boyhood to

middle age. When her husband's death made her eldest son king, as Francis II., he and his wife, Mary Stuart, were under the tutelage of the Guises, and supreme power rested with them, not with her. Francis died at the age of 16, and we are told that Catherine was "blyeth" at the death of her son. It made the boy Charles IX., not yet ten years old, King of France, with his mother as Regent, and her goal reached. Such in barest outline was Catherine's history from 1533 to the accession of Charles IX.

She was never in open opposition to Margaret. Her soft insinuating manners never made an enemy. She was far too astute to put herself into antagonism to one who had so long been the most influential woman in France; but her nature was essentially different from Margaret's at every point, without religion, without enthusiasm, and without generosity; she knew how to influence Francis by amusing him; and from childhood to old age she mined and countermined first for her own protection and afterwards to secure her own ultimate domination. From the date of the Medici marriage, Margaret's star was setting, while the star of Catherine slowly, and at first much obscured by clouds and mists, was rising.

Charles V. affected to pour contempt on the Medici marriage as one beneath the dignity of the son of the King of France; before it took place he pretended to believe it incredible that Francis would

take "a shopkeeper's daughter" for his son's bride. But this was a mere absurdity. The Medicis were almost of royal standing, and on her mother's side Catherine was descended from one of the noblest families of France. The Emperor and the King were as much as ever at rivalry, though not at open war, and each was doing his utmost to secure the papal alliance. The gibe of Charles was aimed at preventing the marriage. In this he failed, and Francis won, but with the bad luck which always seemed to dog him in his never-ending struggle with Charles, the alliance he had bought was of short duration, for Pope Clement VII. died in September, 1534, less than a year after the marriage of his niece with the King's son.

* To show his welcome to his daughter-in-law, Francis gave her, on her marriage, the device of a rainbow, with a Greek motto, which signified "She brings light and serenity." What an unconscious irony! If he had given her a motto signifying "She brings death and destruction" he had been nearer the mark. In those days everyone had "devices" and mottoes. Francis had a salamander surrounded by flames and the motto "*Nutrisco et extinguo*" ("I feed on it and extinguish it"). Margaret had a daisy with the motto "*Non inferiora secutus*," which may perhaps be paraphrased by the English line, "We needs must love the highest when we see it." The

pity was that her "highest" was her brother. The mysterious words of the motto of Francis will bear almost any interpretation. Polite contemporaries said it meant "I nourish good and extinguish evil"; but this has nothing to do with flames and salamanders, nor has it any possible relation to the King's actual performances. If we look at these, the unlucky motto may be interpreted to mean, "I feed on good faith and extinguish it." He broke faith with almost everyone with whom he had dealings—with his sister and her husband about the Spanish provinces of Navarre, and about the marriage of his son with their daughter; with the Protestants whom he burned in France when at the same time he was seeking to enter into an alliance with them in Germany; with Charles V. about the Treaty of Madrid and on a hundred other occasions. He accused Charles of having instigated the murder of his eldest son the dauphin, Francis, whose mysterious death, in 1537, has been just referred to. The unfortunate man, an Italian, Montecuculi, accused of having been the agent of Charles in this matter, was put to death with horrible and unspeakable barbarity; but in less than two years Francis received Charles in France with every outward demonstration of honour and respect. He outraged the conscience of Europe by his alliance with the Turk; he outraged the Sultan by treacherously betraying that alliance. There was no end to his

perfidy and double-dealing. It may be said of Francis that no one ever trusted him without being sorry for it. But, as Brantôme says, "That is how these great kings govern as they please."

The Turk was the common enemy of the Christian world, but Francis, in his eagerness to secure any ally to help him in his war with Charles, had entered into secret relations with the Sultan Solyman immediately after the defeat of Pavia; he had renewed these overtures in 1528 and in 1532. The Sultan had faithfully carried out his part of the understanding. In 1526 an army of 200,000 Turks entered the Austrian dominions of Charles. In 1527 the first famous siege of Vienna by the Turks began; repulsed in 1529, the Sultan again advanced against Vienna in 1532. The horror inspired by the Turks in Europe was unbounded, and the deep suspicion that their attack was prompted by Francis, and carried out in accordance with a secret alliance between him and the Sultan caused a vehement feeling in Germany against the French king. The presence of Turkish armies in South Germany stayed the hand of Charles against the German Lutherans, and to gain their support against the common foe he made concessions to them in the matter of freedom of worship for which they had long struggled in vain. Letters are extant between Charles and his wife, written in 1532, in which he expresses his suspicion of the league of Francis with the Turks,

and she replies that Cardinal Colonna had discovered the actual treaty itself, details of which she described to her husband.

The alliance of Francis with the Turk did not prevent him at the same time, October, 1532, concluding a treaty with Henry VIII. of England against the Turk. In this instrument the Kings of France and England bound themselves to assemble an army of 80,000 men "for the defence and preservation of our most holy religion, in order to resist the damnable machinations and enterprises of the Turk, the ancient adversary of our common faith." He broke faith with the Turks anew in 1545, by the terms of the Treaty of Crespy. For these and other acts of treachery the Sultan felt that Francis had shamelessly deceived him; he declined to receive the ambassador of Francis, and declared that the conduct of the King had been treacherous and dishonourable, "worthy only of Christian politics."

When the war in Italy between Francis and Charles reopened, in 1536, Margaret retired with her husband to their home in Navarre. In one of her letters to Francis, written within a few days of her first arrival in her husband's dominions, she naïvely complains that though she had been five days in Béarn, she had not yet mastered the Basque language. In Pau and Nérac she led a peaceful, idyllic existence; she followed the royal custom of France of dining every day in public, and she

welcomed to her table poets, scholars, theologians, and politicians. To those who needed help and succour she was never slow to extend it. One of her methods of showing courtesy was rather quaint: she would send from her own table, sometimes from her own plate, to any guest whom she wished particularly to honour, some dainty morsel asking him to eat it for love of her. She had always possessed great skill in the planning and laying out of gardens. At Alençon she had created an "earthly paradise," and at Blois and Fontainebleau the pleasure grounds owed much to her delicate fancy and invention. At Nérac and Pau she found delight in the same occupation; and she managed, as it were, to kill two birds with one stone, for she employed in her gardens a great many poor people who were unable to find work elsewhere. She liked to call herself the "prime minister of the poor." When alone in her chamber, says a contemporary panegyrist, "she took up a book instead of a distaff, a pen instead of a spindle, and her tablets instead of a needle." When in company with her ladies she betook herself to needlework, she sometimes told a witty story, or recited a poem, or told someone to read aloud. She would also at times keep two secretaries employed, one in writing down French verses, which she composed with great facility, the other in inditing letters at her dictation to her numerous friends.

The little mountain kingdom of Navarre was far

behind France in commerce and agriculture, and Margaret set herself to improve both. Her husband at first entered into all these plans with enthusiasm, but this gradually cooled; he more and more pursued his own pleasures, and left to her the responsibilities of his dominions. To improve the methods of agriculture, peasants from Brittany and other prosperous parts of France were invited to settle in Béarn, so that the Béarnois might learn by example as well as precept. The manufacture of cloth was also introduced, and was soon practised with success. In no respect did she hold herself aloof from her people. She moved about among them almost unattended, visiting those who also were sick and always ready to help and succour those who were in need. The reform of the laws, the suppression of brigandage and acts of violence against life and property—always more difficult in a mountainous country than elsewhere—met with her active support, and she advised her husband to call the estates of Béarn together to devise a means for the improvement and regulation of the finances.

Brantôme, whose grandmother was her lady of honour, tells several stories about her which are very characteristic, and cannot be better told than in his own words (Miss Wormsley's translation is used):—

“I have heard tell of her that one of her waiting maids whom she much liked, being near to death, she wished to

see her die . . . and never stirred from beside her, gazing so fixedly on her face that she never took her eyes away from it until she died. Some of her most privileged ladies asked her why she took such interest in seeing a human being pass away; to which she answered that, having heard so many learned persons discourse and say that the soul and spirit issue from the body at the moment of death, she wished to see if any wind or noise could be perceived or the slightest resonance, but she had noticed nothing. She also gave a reason she had heard from the same learned persons when she asked them why the swan sang so well before its death; to which they answered that it was its soul which strove to issue from its long throat. In like manner she said she had hoped to see issue or feel resound and hear the soul or spirit as it departed; *but she did not.*"

There is something both naïve and touching in the story. The curious simplicity of this learned and intelligent woman, who received with absolute faith the strange tales she had heard in the discourses of philosophers, proves that the age of incredulity had not yet dawned. How long was it, for instance, and how many swans had to die in silence before the myth of the swan song was relegated to its place among poetic legends? Margaret, with her ear bent to hear the soul issue from the lips of her dying maid, was at the parting of the ways between the age which believed all things and the age which tries to prove all things. Margaret was only at the beginning of this newer time. She looked and listened for the soul, and dearly wished to see or hear it; but she did not. If she had lived a hundred years earlier

she would have been able to see and hear anything she pleased.

Another story relates how Captain de Bourdeille, the brother of Brantôme, when a very young man at the court of Renée, Duchess of Ferrara, met a French lady, Madame de la Roche, by whom he was beloved. He brought her to France, and placed her in the court of the Queen of Navarre, and then went his way, returned to Italy for five or six years, and thought no more about her. The lady in the meantime, about three months before her faithless lover's return, took to her bed and died. Captain de Bourdeille, now a handsome young warrior of twenty-four, went to Pau to pay his respects to the Queen of Navarre, and met her as she was returning from vespers.

"She who was the most excellent princess in the world gave him a hearty welcome; taking him by the hand she led him into the church, where she walked with him for an hour or more, questioning him about the progress of the war in Piedmont and in Italy. . . . At length, after having conversed with him for some time . . . the Queen suddenly paused over the tomb of Madame de la Roche, who had died about three months previously. Taking my brother by the hand, the Queen said: 'Cousin' (so she called him because a daughter of the house of Albret had married into our family of Bourdeille), 'do you not feel something move beneath your feet?' 'No, madame,' he replied. 'Reflect a moment, cousin,' rejoined the Queen. 'Madame, I do reflect,' he answered. 'I feel nothing move, for I am standing on a solid stone.' 'Then I admonish you,' replied the Queen,

without keeping him further in suspense, 'that you are standing on the tomb of poor Madame de la Roche, who is buried here beneath you, and whom you so greatly loved; and since souls have feelings after death, it cannot be doubted that so honest a being, dying of coldness, felt your step above her; and though you felt nothing because of the thickness of that stone, she was moved and conscious of your presence. Now inasmuch as it is a pious deed to remember the dead whom we have loved, I beseech you to sprinkle her tomb with holy water, and give her a *Pater Noster*, an *Ave Maria*, and a *De Profundis*, in doing which you will prove yourself a faithful lover and a good Christian.' So saying the Queen departed, and my brother did not fail to obey her."

The story illustrates Margaret's half poetical, half cynical mood. "One foot on sea, and one on shore, to one thing constant never": she had proof enough of that in her own domestic life. But she was more amused than bitter, whether the man were Henry of Navarre or Captain de Bourdeille.

These later years of Margaret's life have an almost unbroken gloom. She felt her power over her brother slipping away. Her sympathy with the Reformation had been cooled by Protestant excesses and crimes, but she still made her court the refuge of those who were driven out of France for conscience' sake. The miserable tale of her forcing a hated marriage on her only child is the worst blot on her memory. The marriage ceremony—it was no more—took place at Chastellerault, in 1540. It marked

the downfall of Montmorency. Jeanne was so laden with jewels and cloth of gold that she could not, perhaps would not, move. Francis called to Montmorency, and ordered him to carry the child to the altar. It was meant as an insult, and understood as such by all present. Queen Margaret had her little thrill of personal triumph, and said to those near her: "The man who tried to ruin me with my brother now serves to carry my daughter to church." While Montmorency muttered: "It is all over with my favour; good-bye to it, say I." He was both right and wrong. It was all over with the favour of Francis, who in dying warned his successor against Montmorency; but the warning was disregarded, and all through the reign of Henry II. the Constable was more powerful than he had ever been before. The festivities, jousts, and processions attendant on the marriage of the Princess Jeanne to the Duke of Cleves were on a scale of boundless magnificence. Francis was always lavish in matters of this kind. A rise in the salt tax, which took place immediately afterwards, produced a popular impression that it had been rendered necessary by the cost of these junketings, and the people, in view of the whole situation, gave the wedding the terrible nickname of "*les noces salées*."

Jeanne was compelled to be present at all the fêtes and tournaments given on the occasion, but no one could compel her to enter into their gaiety. She

sat, sad and sullen, no whit shaken in her determined opposition to the alliance forced upon her. She was only twelve, but she knew her own mind, and could hold fast to it through all opposition.

Her mother was untouched, and Jeanne's distress left her cold and unsympathetic. Nothing had any weight with her compared with the slightest wish of Francis. Any demand from him, however unreasonable, was certain to be met by her with unreasoning subservience.

When the Duke of Cleves, by his submission to Charles three years later, made Francis as anxious to break the match as he had previously been to insist upon it, Margaret was equally complaisant. She avowed, in a letter to her brother, that as long as it was the will of Francis that the marriage should take place, "we would rather have seen our daughter die as she protested she would do than prevent her" from carrying out her uncle's designs; but since the Duke of Cleves had been "so infamous and vile" as to make his submission to the Emperor, Margaret declares anew that she would rather see her daughter in her grave than in the power of a man who had deceived Francis.

The Queen of Navarre's slavish devotion to her brother was like a canker poisoning her whole nature. Personally fastidious, and daintily pure in her own tastes and predilections, she cheerfully wallowed in the mud of Boccaccian romance in the

hope of amusing and diverting him. A dissolute life had brought upon him the penalty of premature old age. He was ill, morose, melancholy, weary, and at the same time wildly restless. He had lost his eldest son, and he was estranged from the Dauphin, who seldom came near him. His neglected wife shut herself up in her own apartments. She bitterly resented the manner in which the King had treated her, and her married life had brought her nothing but misery and disillusion. If Francis neglected his wife, he distrusted his mistress; there was an incessant squalid war between her and the mistress of the Dauphin, Diana of Poitiers, which broke the court into two rival factions. Francis's youngest son, the "Monsieur d'Angoulême" of Margaret's earlier letters, had now become Charles, Duke of Orleans. He was his father's favourite—wild, gay, and high spirited, very much what Francis had been in his own youth. He died of plague in 1545, almost in his father's arms.

There was no one but Margaret in the immediate family of Francis who could offer him any solace or consolation, and she was often at her wits' end to think what she could do to soothe him. Sometimes he was sunk in lethargy, but more often he wandered restlessly from place to place, seeking peace and finding none. To amuse him, she read him the stories of the "Decameron"; then, when the amusement to be had from them was exhausted,

Margaret had the idea that she would invent some more stories on the same pattern. The "Heptameron" was the result of her efforts. The stories, and the whole scheme of their construction, were an obvious and avowed imitation of the "Decameron," with the one important difference that Margaret's stories were true, or at least founded on fact. They would thus, though less artistic from a literary point of view, be more entertaining to Francis, who would there read, from the ever-flattering pen of his sister, an account of his own youthful escapades, escapes, and adventures. Most of the tales are unsavoury, to use the mildest possible term; even French critics have described them as "*peu délicates*," and even "*ords et salles*." But before condemning Margaret too severely the standard of decency of the century in which she lived must be remembered, and also that she was writing for the amusement of Francis.

The framework of the "Heptameron" is this: The writer supposes that a party of distinguished ladies and gentlemen, French and Spanish, have met at the baths of Cauterets, in the Pyrenees. On separating and returning to their respective countries, the French are stopped near the Abbaye of Nôtre Dame de Serrance by finding the river Gave in flood; as the river was not fordable they resolve to build a bridge. The workmen say this cannot be done in less than ten days. The party of travellers

are sure that the time will hang very heavy on their hands unless they can find "some pleasant and virtuous" occupation to distract them. They consult the eldest of their company, Dame Oisille, generally identified with Margaret herself. She replies that, having searched for a remedy for *ennui* all her life, she has found nothing so efficacious as the reading of the Holy Epistles; but as she recognises that this is too austere a remedy for the young, she suggests that, after dining every day at 10 a.m., they should disperse each to his or her own private affairs and meet again at midday "in the beautiful meadow on the banks of the river Gave, where the trees are so leafy that the sun cannot pierce the shadows or heat the coolness; there, seated at our ease, each shall tell some story he has known or heard related from a trustworthy person." As the company were ten in number, and there were ten days, the intention was to produce a hundred stories. But either because the springs of Margaret's remembrance ran dry, or for some other reason, the ten days were reduced to seven, and Margaret's book was a "Hep-tameron," and not a "Decameron." St. Beuve says of her stories that quite apart from their distastefulness according to the standard of the present time, there is not much in them that is really charming; that they are without art, composition, and *dénouement*; at the same time he absolves her from any indecency in intention.

Their intention, one may be sure, was the distraction of her brother, and at the same time, if possible, to bring him back to a frame of mind more in harmony with her own on the subject of the reform of religion. Nearly all the stories of the "Heptameron" turn on the villainies, stupidities, and immoralities of monks. Dame Oisille exclaims, "Good God, shall we never get out of these stories of monks?" The King and his sister had drifted far apart in their attitude towards reform. Margaret, it is true, did not openly break with Rome; she conformed outwardly, and was blamed by Béza for it. But her sympathies always remained true to the cause of reform. Francis had by this time given a free rein to the cruellest and bitterest of the persecutors. How little effect the very mild remonstrance of his sister produced may be judged by the fact that the writing of the "Heptameron," in 1544, was immediately followed by the massacre of the Vaudois in 1545.

These simple mountain people were reformers before the Reformation. They had preserved from the earliest times a form of the Christian faith similar to that which the reformers were seeking to make universal. They did not believe in Purgatory, nor in prayers for the dead, nor in confession, but taught that it is sufficient to confess to God, and that God alone has the right to excommunicate. Among their positive doctrines they believed that

every good and holy man was the Son of God, even as was Christ Himself, and that the soul of every good man is the Holy Spirit of God. They were in many respects like Quakers; they would not swear, they would not lie, and their lives were pure and virtuous. They neither adored the cross nor the elements in the sacrament; they accounted a church or churchyard no holier than any other place, for they said that the whole earth was equally blessed by God. They condemned war, and they had no consecrated priesthood. In 1530, when the news of the Reformation first reached them, they received it with joy, and in 1536 they formally joined the Reformed Church of Geneva. The Inquisition kept an eye on them and waited only a favourable moment to plan their destruction. This came in 1545, when Francis signed the Treaty of Crespy, which concluded peace between himself, Charles V., and Henry VIII. Cardinal de Tournon, who fifteen years earlier had vehemently resisted the bringing of Melancthon to Paris, had acted as the minister in attendance on Francis, when the terms of this peace were arranged. Five years earlier, in 1540, he had secured from the King a writ condemning to death for heresy the head of every household among the Vaudois. Guillaume du Bellay had then come to the rescue, and had secured the suspension of the iniquitous decree. But du Bellay was now dead; Margaret was away, and Cardinal de Tournon was

at the elbow of Francis, acting as his evil genius. He urged the King to prove his zeal as a true son of the Church, and to justify his title of Most Christian King (a little smirched by the alliance with the Turks), by signing a writ condemning to death the whole Vaudois population, men, women, and children. This monstrous crime was as near as might be carried into execution. Two towns, Cabrières and Mérindol, and twenty-two villages were burned to ashes, and every man, woman, and child they contained put to death; even babies at the breast were not spared. Of the whole community only a remnant escaped by flying over the frontiers into Switzerland.

A bitter cry of rage and horror went up. Francis declared he had never read the writ which authorised the massacre. What must Margaret have felt? Where was the dream of her youth that her glorious and triumphant Cæsar would lead the reform movement in Europe and procure the purification of Christendom from within? The only answer was found in the smoking, bloodstained ashes of what once were innocent and happy homes. It was not only the Vaudois villages which lay in ashes, it was Margaret's life and Francis's reputation.

Not long after this, March 31st, 1547, came the death of the King. Henry VIII. had died earlier in the same year, and Charles V. was only waiting for a suitable moment to carry out his long-cherished

plan of abdicating his crowns and retiring to a monastery to end his days.

Two of the three young sovereigns who had been rival candidates for the Empire in 1519, whose strenuous personalities had played such a leading part in the history of Europe and of the Reformation for nearly half a century, were now removed, and their place knew them no more. With the death of Francis, Margaret's life may be said to have ended too. She had not been with him at the end. With the fitful restlessness of disease he had roamed from place to place, stopping at nearly a dozen different castles in the last six weeks of his life. Hunting by day, groaning and tossing by night, consumed by an unquenchable thirst, the King's misery gave him no rest. At one moment he would ardently desire his sister's presence and despatch a courier to fetch her; the next another courier would be sent post-haste to stop the first. He did, however, send for his heir, the Dauphin, and bade him as his dying wish never to recall Montmorency, to check the pretensions of the Guises, and to remit taxation: admonitions of which Henry II. took little heed.

When Francis died at Rambouillet, Margaret was staying in the convent at Tusson. It was a fortnight before the news of her brother's death reached her. She had been full of anxiety about him. One night early in April she dreamed of him,

and saw him standing pale and ghastly at the side of her bed. He cried, "*Ma sœur, ma sœur!*" and she awoke trembling and full of renewed apprehension.

When the news of the King's death reached the convent, the nuns were afraid to tell her of it; they even told her that he was better. But the place must have been full of an air of mystery and concealment, for she was not satisfied, and despatched a messenger of her own to make inquiries at the court. She then proceeded to the chapel to pray. As she passed through the cloisters she heard the sound of bitter weeping. Following the sound, she discovered it proceeded from a poor, half-crazy nun, whose intellect was unequal to the task of telling anything but the truth. "My sister," said the Queen, "what is it that you weep for?" The nun looked up and said, "For you, Madame." And hiding her face in her veil, she fled. Then Margaret knew that her brother was dead. Her sun had gone down, and she was left in darkness. She must have thought of those earlier days when "*notre trinité*" had been so happy, so hopeful, so full of the great things they intended to do. Now she was the only one left. She was very much alone, her daughter was cold and estranged, her husband no longer made much pretence of loving her. The jolly King of Navarre was by no means inconsolable for the death of his brother-in-law.

When the Queen of Navarre visited her nephew's court, she very quickly found what a different position she occupied in it from that she had held when Francis was king. The mistress of Henry II., the famous Diana of Poitiers, was now the predominant influence there. The King and the whole court (including Catherine de Medici) wore Diana's colours, quaintly enough the black and white of her mourning for her husband ; her crescent, motto, and monogram formed part of the architectural ornament of the royal palaces, and anyone may see them to-day, and the D interlaced with the H, on the oldest existing court of the Louvre.

The annulling of the union with the Duke of Cleves, and her marriage with the man of her choice. Anthony of Bourbon, Duke of Vendome, gave Jeanne the liveliest satisfaction, but awakened little or no interest in her mother. Henry II. was glad to get his cousin Jeanne safely married to a Frenchman ; the dread of a Spanish marriage was ever before his eyes ; he was as much set against it as his father had been.

Princess Jeanne was at this period of her life extravagant and wilful. She was heiress of a crown, and she spent royally and profusely. She kept up a splendid household in Paris, quite regardless of the pecuniary losses which her mother had suffered since the death of King Francis. It is a little humiliating to find Margaret beseeching Montmorency and Diana

of Poitiers to use their influence with the new king for the continuance of the pension, 25,000 livres Tournois, which she had enjoyed during the reign of Francis. It is difficult to discover what had become of the great revenues Margaret had enjoyed during the earlier part of her brother's reign. The huge wealth of Louise, to which the estates of Bourbon had been added, had been absorbed by Francis. He was a great spending department; probably all the disposable revenues of Margaret had gone the same way. It is certain that towards the close of her life she was in straits for money. She passed much of her time in the convent at Tusson, and reduced her expenses to the narrowest limits. Her whole expenditure for the year 1548, exclusive of pensions and gifts to the poor, only reached 220 livres Tournois.

She left the convent at Tusson to receive her daughter and her husband at Pau and welcome them to Béarn; but the pomp and display of the visit only wearied her. She was growing very weak and very tired. The well-meaning nuns at Tusson tried to console her by talking of the bliss of Paradise. But Margaret was very human and healthy-minded; she did not wish to die. To one who talked of death and the happiness succeeding it she replied, "All that is true, but we shall stay a long time under ground before we come to that." Brantôme relates this, and also that when her attendants told her she must

die she replied that those words were most bitter, adding that she was not so old but that she might live on for many years. She was fifty-seven when she died at the Castle of Odoz, in Bigorre. Brantôme confidently says she "took her illness looking at a comet which appeared at the death of Pope Paul III." She no doubt had a stroke of paralysis, for he speaks of her mouth being drawn a little sideways. She was speechless for three days. When her speech returned she is reported to have said that she had protected the reformers more from compassion than because she shared their beliefs. This is asserted by all Catholic historians, and vehemently contested by all Protestant historians. What she said when she was dying is not of so much importance as her words and actions when she was in the height of her intelligence and vigour. No doubt compassion went a long way in influencing Margaret, if that compassion could be gratified without running counter to her brother's wishes or interests; but there was much more than compassion in her intercourse with Erasmus, Melancthon, Calvin, Roussel, Lefèvre, Marot, the du Bellays, Béza, and the Estiennes. If she had had the power she would have done much to secure the reformation of the church from within, and on spiritual rather than on political lines.

With her faults, which are obvious enough, she will always remain a most attractive, pathetic figure;


—the *Marguerite des Marguerites*, the pearl of pearls, gentle, joyous, generous, but wrecking her life's highest hopes by unmeasured devotion to an unworthy idol. If her pearls were wasted on Francis, they were not wasted on the learning she encouraged, the reformers she succoured, the high ideals she nourished in the inmost sanctuary of her soul.

PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF LOUISE
OF SAVOY, DUCHESS OF ANGOULÊME,
AND OF MARGARET HER DAUGHTER,
DUCHESS OF ALENÇON AND QUEEN OF
NAVARRÉ.

- 1476.—Birth of Louise of Savoy.
1491.—Her marriage with the Count of Angoulême.
1492.—Birth of her daughter, Margaret.
1494.—Birth of her son Francis, afterwards Duke of
Valois, and King of France.
1496.—Death of her husband.
1498.—Death of Charles VIII. Accession of Louis XII.
1499.—Marriage of the new King with Anne of Brittany,
the late King's widow. Birth of Princess
Claude, the heiress of Brittany.
1500.—Birth of Archduke Charles, afterwards Charles V.
1509.—Marriage of Margaret with the Duke of Alençon.
1514.—Death of the Queen, Anne of Brittany. Marriage
of Francis, Duke of Valois, with Princess
Claude. Marriage of Louis XII. with Mary
Tudor.
1515.—Death of Louis XII. on New Year's Day. Acces-
sion of Francis I. His first Italian campaign.

- 1516.—The Concordat between Francis I. and Pope Leo X.
- 1519.—Death of the Emperor Maximilian, and election as Emperor of his grandson, the Archduke Charles, as Charles V.
- 1520.—The Field of the Cloth of Gold.
- 1522.—Discomfiture of the French army at Milan under Lautrec. Appropriation by Louise of 400,000 crowns intended for his relief. Bitter feud between Louise and Charles of Montpensier, Constable of France and Duke of Bourbon. Louise claims his estates and he goes into rebellion.
- 1524.—Death of Queen Claude. Francis I. departs for Italy, leaving his mother regent.
- 1525.—Defeat of Francis at Pavia, February 24: his imprisonment in Spain. Death of the Duke of Alençon. Margaret's embassy to Spain. Persecution of heresy becomes more severe in France. Secret understanding between Francis and the Sultan entered into.
- 1526.—Release of Francis. His two elder sons given as hostages to Charles V. Treaty of Madrid.
- 1527.—Death of the Constable Montpensier at the sack of Rome. Marriage of Margaret with Henry d'Albret, the King of Navarre.
- 1528.—Birth of Margaret's daughter, Jeanne d'Albret, afterwards Queen of Navarre in her own right. Desecration in Paris of a famous image of the Virgin. Reaction against the Reformation.
- 1529.—The burning of Louis de Berquin. The peace of Cambray (the Ladies' Peace). The siege of Vienna by the Turks. The founding of the Collège de France.

- 1530.—The ransom of the Princes and the marriage of Francis with Eleanor of Portugal. Birth and death of Margaret's son. Renewal of persecution of Protestants.
- 1531.—Death of Louise of Savoy.
- 1532.—Margaret's poem, "The Mirror of a Sinful Soul," published.
- 1533.—Attack upon Margaret by the Sorbonne and the University. The address of Nicholas Cop to the University: his flight to Geneva. The flight of Calvin to Margaret's protection at Nérac. Marriage of Henry, second son of Francis I., with Catherine de Medici. Marriage of Henry VIII. with Anne Boleyn.
- 1534.—Affair of the "placards": further reaction against Church reform: period of violent persecution sets in. Death of Pope Clement VII.
- 1536.—War between Francis I. and Charles V. breaks out again. Treaty between Francis and the Sultan.
- 1537.—Death of the Dauphin. Charles V. accused of having caused his death.
- 1538.—Truce between Francis I. and Charles V.
- 1539.—Charles V. received by Francis I. with extreme honour and ceremony on his passage through France to the Netherlands.
- 1540.—Enforced marriage between Princess Jeanne and the Duke of Cleves.
- 1541.—Renewal of war between Charles V. and Francis I.
- 1543.—The marriage of Princess Jeanne with the Duke of Cleves dissolved by the Pope.
- 1544.—Probable date of the writing of "The Hép-tameron."



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1545.—Massacre of the Vaudois.

1547.—Death of Francis I. : accession of Henry II.

1548.—Marriage of Princess Jeanne to Antony of Bourbon, Duke of Vendôme. Betrothal of the Dauphin Francis to Mary Queen of Scots, niece of the Guises.

1549.—Death of Margaret.



JEANNE D'ALBRET.



JEANNE D'ALBRET, QUEEN OF NAVARRE.

It has been the fate of Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, to be known to history and to the gossip which enlivens history, chiefly as the mother of a famous son, and as the daughter of a distinguished mother. Notwithstanding that she was a Queen Regnant, and had a force and vigour of character well suited to her station, and to the stirring and important years during which she lived, her fame is overshadowed by that of a famous mother and of a still more famous son. Just as the little independent principality, Béarn, which made her a queen, was overshadowed by its great neighbours, France and Spain, so Jeanne herself is overshadowed by her mother, Margaret of Angoulême, poetess and reformer; and by her son, the great Henry of Navarre, who became Henri IV. of France. She therefore flits through history as "his mother, a grand and noble lady." No unenviable fate, it may be frankly acknowledged. Still, such words awaken curiosity. It is not enough to call

her "grand and noble," we wish to know what made her so.

The little kingdom of Navarre had at one time spread itself on both sides of the Pyrenees. Ferdinand the Catholic had seized the Spanish provinces of Navarre fifteen years before the birth of Jeanne, and the hope of recovering these lost provinces often had an all-powerful influence in determining the policy of her father, herself, her husband, and her son. The place which the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine holds in the imagination of the French people was occupied in the sixteenth century, in the minds of Jeanne and of her house and people, by the hope of recovering the provinces of Spanish Navarre.

In those days, even more than in our own, the marriages of princes and princesses were determined by political considerations. It was no uncommon thing for a woman of forty to be sought in marriage by a boy of sixteen, nor for a man of mature years to enter into an arrangement to marry a baby then in the cradle. The Emperor Charles V., for example, was betrothed to a baby in arms, and it was at the same time arranged that if that baby died he should wed another child of the same house, then unborn. It will be easily understood that situated as it was on the mountains between France and Spain, and holding the key of many of the passes between the two kingdoms, the marriages of

the princes and princesses of Navarre should become political events of no small importance to the two powerful kingdoms flanking her north and south.

To read *Love's Labour's Lost* is to understand how, under the most favourable circumstances, a marriage between a king of Navarre and a princess of France was sometimes arranged. A princess arrives to negotiate a treaty, and the astute old courtier, who well understands the rules of the game, quickly sees that a marriage treaty would include and supersede other treaties of a purely political kind.

There were frequent marriages between the royal houses of France and Navarre. That of Jeanne's mother had been prompted by affection rather than by politics, nevertheless it was not without its political uses to France. It secured that the interests and powers of Navarre should be exercised on behalf of France, and above all not exercised on behalf of her powerful neighbour and rival, Spain. Margaret, Queen of Navarre, never ceased to be at heart a Frenchwoman and a devotedly loyal subject of her brother Francis. A subject, technically, she was not as regarded the principality of Béarn; but a subject she was as regarded the Counties of Foix, Armagnac, Albret, Bigorre, and Comminges, which she and her husband held in feudal tenure under the suzerainty of the King of France. Queen Margaret showed her

devotion to her brother in a manner which reminds us of Canute's rebuke to his courtiers. The Queen of Navarre was residing at Fontainebleau expecting the birth of her child. The King, her brother, was absent in Paris occupied by affairs of state. Letters constantly passed between them, and in one of these the Queen wrote, "I cannot believe my child will presume to be born without your command." However, Jeanne, ever a less accomplished courtier than her mother, did presume to be born in the palace at Fontainebleau on January 7th, 1528, while King Francis was still in Paris, and without having received the royal permission to make her entry into the world.

The place where Jeanne was born was not without its political significance; the Princess Royal of Navarre was born in the French king's palace, because her loving uncle intended to keep possession of her as a hostage for her father's fidelity. As years passed, Jeanne's importance grew with her growth; a boy, born to her parents when she was about two and a half years' old, only lived a few months, and as no other children survived their birth, Jeanne was recognised as heiress presumptive of her father's throne.

All the firmer therefore did Francis retain his grip on her. The natural desire of her parents to take their child with them to Béarn was absolutely negated by the King of France. He insisted that

she should be brought up entirely in France, and under his control, and he established the child in the royal castle of Plessis-les-Tours, well known, as readers of "Quentin Durward" need not be reminded, as the gloomy fortress palace of Louis XI., near Tours, on the Loire, about 130 miles south-west of Paris. The poor little princess was only four years old when she was installed at Plessis-les-Tours, with a lady of honour, a preceptor, two chaplains, a steward, a master of the horse, tirewomen, and other attendants, but with no father and mother to pet and love her. The only master of the horse required by a baby of four years old would have been a master of the rocking horse. Her lady of honour, Madame de Silly, Baillive de Caen, secured the child's affection, but from the first Jeanne's character showed itself the stronger of the two. She was very conscious of the dignity of her royal birth, fearlessly truthful, fearlessly outspoken, and sharp and witty in her retorts. The drilled submissiveness of Madame de Silly was often aghast at the audacious way in which Jeanne addressed her uncle, the King of France, who visited her from time to time. He suspected his brother-in-law, Jeanne's father, the King of Navarre, of wishing to negotiate a marriage for his daughter with Philip, Prince of Spain, then five years old, son of Charles V. One great inducement to the King of Navarre in favouring this marriage was that he believed he

could thereby recover the lost Spanish provinces of his kingdom. But this marriage would have virtually incorporated the whole of Navarre with Spain, and have given to a future Spanish prince feudal rights over several of the southern provinces of France; it was accordingly regarded by Francis with determined and ceaseless opposition. The more securely to prevent it he informed the King of Navarre that he meant to bestow the hand of Jeanne on his second son, Henry, Duke of Orleans, afterwards Henry II. But Francis, who was everything by turns and nothing long, abandoned this proposed marriage, and before Jeanne was six years old he bestowed her prospective bridegroom on another bride, destined throughout her life to be Jeanne's evil genius, the far-famed and ill-famed Catherine de Medici. It is probable that Francis held out the prospect of the marriage of Jeanne with his second son just long enough to reconcile the King and Queen of Navarre to the establishment of their child, out of their own control, in the castle of Plessis-les-Tours.

In 1538, Jeanne being then ten years old, a change for the better was made in her lonely and miserable childhood. Her aunt, her father's sister, Isabel d'Albret, Viscountess de Rohan, with two children, came to live at Plessis. One of these children, Françoise de Rohan, was of an age to be a playmate and companion to Jeanne; but she was

of a timid and shrinking disposition, and Jeanne appears to have thought she required a good deal of corporal punishment, the administration of which she entrusted to no hand but her own. We owe the knowledge of these domestic details to a valedictory verse written by Mlle. de Rohan when she left Plessis, in which she declares that the oftener she was beaten the stronger grew her love for her chastiser, and that she preferred the severity of Jeanne's hand to wealth and honour!

In these strange and unwholesome surroundings, poisoned on the one hand by flattery, on the other by the unnatural loneliness and severity of her education, Jeanne's character developed more in the direction of strength than of sweetness. She was always from her infancy extraordinarily tenacious in her desires and affections. She passionately longed to return to her own home, to be with her own parents. She wept for hours in her lonely palace at Plessis the bitter tears of childhood which blind the eyes to any possible deliverance from present affliction. In 1540, when she was about twelve, she was surprised by a sudden visit from her uncle, King Francis, who informed her that he had at last consented to her joining her mother, Queen Margaret, at Alençon, but only on the condition that she should be immediately betrothed to the Duke of Cleves, brother of the Anne of Cleves who had just been married to Henry VIII. of

England. The two marriages were part of one political scheme, to unite the Protestant princes of Germany and England against Charles V. Jeanne at once strongly expressed her repugnance to the proposed marriage. But Francis was immovable, and his will was law.

Nearly the whole of his reign had been one long struggle with Charles V. The enmity between the houses of Hapsburg and Valois was hereditary. Francis had been defeated by the Emperor at Pavia in 1525, had been his prisoner in Spain, and had only been set free on condition of leaving his two young sons as hostages behind him. His enmity to Spain was one of the very few traits of constancy in his character, and what particularly recommended the Duke of Cleves to his mind as a suitable husband for his niece, was that at that moment he was in rebellion against Charles V., the point in dispute between them being their rival claims to the Duchy of Guelderland. By giving Jeanne's hand to the Duke, he strengthened his own position in antagonism to Charles, and likewise put an end to all danger of her eventual marriage with the Prince of Spain. The King of Navarre and the national council of Béarn for the same reasons objected to the marriage. It could be no advantage to Navarre to have its future Queen married to a prince in rebellion against his suzerain, and that suzerain their powerful neighbour, the King of Spain.

The Duke of Cleves was a Protestant, and this recommended him in the eyes of Queen Margaret, who had strong sympathies with the reformed religion, and no doubt favoured the Protestant alliance just referred to. But, all questions of religion apart, she then and always supported the authority and was guided by the wishes of her brother.

Jeanne had her desire and left Plessis, joining the court in Paris for a few days. Here she met the Duke of Cleves, and took the opportunity of testifying, by her behaviour, how little the proposed marriage was to her mind. King Francis and Madame de Silly, her lady of honour, reproved her and tried in vain to control her. She had no wish to marry the Duke, and concealment of her feelings was always a hard task to her. She was then sent on to Queen Margaret, who wrote the humblest apologies in excuse for her daughter's contumacy. "Having heard, monseigneur, that my daughter—not appreciating as she ought the great honour which you conferred by deigning to visit her, nor the obedience which she owes to you; neither that a maiden ought to have no will of her own—was bold enough to utter so senseless a request as to beseech you that she might not be married to M. de Cleves. . . I entreat you very humbly, monseigneur, that for this one unreasonable petition she has preferred, and which is the

first fault she has committed in respect to yourself, you will not withdraw that paternal favour which you have ever manifested towards her and ourselves."

Jeanne, however, remained obdurate. Her mother ordered her to be whipped daily; but she was not to be daunted. She had given blows and was now prepared to receive them. Notwithstanding her opposition, however, all the preparations for the betrothal went forward. It was understood that although the marriage was to take place almost immediately after the betrothal, Jeanne was to remain in her mother's care for three years after the ceremony. Both before and after the betrothal the little princess drew up with her own hand remarkable documents protesting earnestly that the contract was against her will, that she never had consented and never would consent to it, that she did not love the Duke of Cleves, and would not have him for her husband; that she yielded to threats, not only of a whipping, but of punishment so severe as to be likely to cause her death. "Therefore," she says in the first of these documents, "I protest beforehand, if it happens that I am affianced, or married to the said Duke of Cleves in any way or manner, it will be against my heart, and in defiance of my will; and that he shall never become my husband, nor will I ever hold or regard him as such, and that my marriage shall be reputed null and

void." This was signed by Jeanne, and witnessed by three members of her household. Again before the marriage a similar protest was drawn up, signed, and witnessed that she only yielded "under violence and restraint."

Notwithstanding her protests the marriage ceremony took place at Châtellerault on July 15th, 1540. The poor child was arrayed in cloth of gold, and loaded with jewels; a ducal coronet, decorated with costly gems, was placed on her head. Her tenacity of will led her to resist to the last. When King Francis advanced to lead the bride to the altar, Jeanne declared she was unable to walk under the weight of gold and jewels with which she was covered. Greatly enraged, Francis then ordered the Constable Montmorency to carry her to the altar! Thus was the Duke of Cleves wedded.

Immediately after the marriage ceremony Jeanne was placed in her mother's charge, and for three years she was under the tutelage of the ablest and most accomplished princess of her time, with much benefit to herself as regarded her education.

In the meantime the chances of war favoured Jeanne's determination never to regard the Duke of Cleves as her husband. In his first battle with Charles V. he was badly worsted; ill-luck continued to pursue him; he never received the military support which he had a right to expect from Francis, and Charles swore rather to forfeit his crown than

to leave the Duke an inch of territory. He saw himself on the brink of utter ruin, and in order to save at least his Duchy from being absorbed in the dominions of the victorious Emperor, he made an absolute and unconditional surrender. Charles exacted from him the most humiliating terms, which included his renunciation of the reformed religion, and the restoration of Roman Catholicism in his dominions; his alliance with the King of France was to be repudiated, his claims to Guelderland abandoned, his treaty-making power curtailed, his soldiers to be incorporated in the Imperial army, and his chief fortresses to be manned by Imperial troops.

Francis, who had done nothing else for his *protégé*, had ordered Jeanne to proceed to Luxembourg and thence to Aix-la-Chapelle for the completion of the marriage contract. Her vehement protests that she would rather die were unheeded; Francis was proposing to conduct her himself from Luxembourg to Aix-la-Chapelle, where she was to be handed over to her bridegroom, when the news reached Francis of the Duke's submission to Charles V.

The tables were now turned; Francis became as anxious to annul the marriage as Jeanne herself. Her reiterated protests, which had been treated as waste-paper at the time when she penned them, now became important state papers. The French ambassador in Rome was instructed by Francis to ask

the Pope for a bull to declare the marriage void, on the ground that violence had been done to the feelings of the Princess! Jeanne's joy at the release was unbounded, and so also, one may imagine, was her contempt for her uncle. Her mother, as usual, entirely acquiesced in everything which Francis wished. The shadow of this marriage hung over Jeanne till the spring of 1545, and, indeed, in a sense over the whole of her life; but at Easter, 1545, she made her final public protest against it in the chapel of the royal château at Tours, and shortly afterwards the Pope declared the marriage null and void, and that Jeanne and the Duke of Cleves were free to marry whom they would. A strange and tragic story to darken the life of a young girl during the years between twelve and seventeen.

Jeanne was now at last free, and it was not long before she became free also from the capricious tyranny of her Uncle Francis. He died on March 31st, 1547, and was succeeded by his second son, Henry II., the husband of Catherine de Medici. The eldest son of Francis had died in 1536, not without suspicion of poison affixing itself to the name of his sister-in-law, Catherine. One may say of this lady that throughout her life no one who stood in her way could die without the suspicion being aroused that she had helped him out of the world. Her manners were sweetness itself, "her conduct was cited as a model of feminine propriety,"

but it was certainly very dangerous and often fatal to oppose or thwart her; she presented the strongest possible contrast to the abrupt honesty of Jeanne, who said what she meant and meant what she said. The succession of Catherine's husband, Henry II., to the throne of France did not immediately give her a position of political importance. He was entirely under the influence of his mistress, Diane de Poitiers. Catherine made no complaint; she bided her time. She ornamented her dress with Diane's monogram, and was the most complaisant of wives. She had ten children, the worst of all the bad things she did for France, says Dean Kitchin. Three of them sat on the throne of France, three of the worst kings who ever reigned, and the wickedest of the three, Henry III., was her favourite son. Her husband died young, after a reign of only ten years; a wound received in a tournament proved fatal eleven days after its infliction. The reign of the Dauphin, Francis, was even shorter. His accession threw supreme power into the hands of the Guises, through their niece, Mary Stuart, then for a few months Queen of France. Francis II. died of some unknown and mysterious disorder at the age of seventeen at Orleans. Now was Catherine's opportunity, so long waited for. The death of Francis II. undermined the power of the Guises; Catherine, as Regent, during the minority of the child Charles IX., then



CATHERINE DE MEDICI.

FROM THE DRAWING BY MAURASSE.



only ten years old, became the dominant will in the government of France, and the high death-rate in royal circles was checked. Catherine was by no means a genius, but she knew what she wanted and was absolutely unscrupulous in its pursuit. She never forgave an enemy, or hesitated at any means of getting rid of one. Such was the princess with whom Jeanne waged a life-long contest.

On the death of Francis I. and the release of Jeanne from her supposed marriage with the Duke of Cleves, the question of uniting her with Philip of Spain, son of Charles V., was again brought forward; but the match was vetoed as positively by Henry II. as it had been by his father. Her chief suitors were Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Guise, and Antony of Bourbon, Duke of Vendôme. Of the two the Duke of Guise was by far the ablest. But the prizes in the court of marriage are not given as the result of a competitive examination, and Jeanne chose Antony of Bourbon. He was just ten years older than herself, of the blood royal, and after the King's sons next in succession to the throne. He was handsome, dashing, brave, and foolish. The magnificence of his dress and jewels was conspicuous. He was the glass of fashion and the mould of form in the French court. His inclination to favour the reformed religion recommended him to Jeanne's mother, though not then to Jeanne herself. The marriage took place at Moulins in October, 1548,

but not without a painful scene with the bridegroom, who at the very last moment was seized with violent doubts as to the validity of Jeanne's former marriage with the Duke of Cleves. All the facts in connection with it had been public property for four years; all the world knew that the marriage had been but a form and had been annulled by the Church; Antony shared this knowledge, and knowing it had become an ardent suitor for the hand of the Princess; it was characteristic of his vacillating, unstable character that at the eleventh hour, on the very day fixed for the marriage, he should seek to draw back from it. However, his scruples were overcome and the ceremony proceeded. Immediately after the wedding Jeanne's other suitor, the Duke of Guise, was betrothed to Anne d'Este, daughter of Renée, Duchess of Ferrara, granddaughter of Louis XII., and first cousin on the mother's side to the King of France. "*Autre temps, autre mœurs.*" This lady's portrait without a stitch of clothing, unless an olive branch, a dove, a velvet toque, a gold chain and bracelets, can be so described, is preserved in the museum of Aix, in Provence, and was exhibited in Paris in 1904 in the exhibition of early French Art.

Jeanne and her husband visited Béarn very soon after their marriage, and were rapturously received by the little principality. The death of Jeanne's mother took place about two months after the marriage. At the end of two years Jeanne's first

child was born, a son, named Henry, after his grandfather the King of Navarre. The child was sacrificed to the ignorance of the time. Jeanne confided him to the care of the same Madame de Silly who had been her own lady of honour and governess during her childhood. This lady possessed the horror of fresh air which still survives among the ignorant; but she had it in a terribly aggravated form. When Jeanne's little son was confided to her she lived in an apartment of which the windows were rendered absolutely air-tight; it was heated by a stove kept burning during the whole day and night, and the walls were heavily covered by tapestry. In this oven the poor baby was kept, and was never taken into the open air even in the finest weather. He must have had a strong constitution, for it took eighteen months of this treatment to kill him; very soon afterwards the Princess had another son. This time Jeanne had learned from experience, and kept the child in her own care; he was a strong and healthy infant, but he fell a victim, when only a few months old, to an accident caused by the carelessness of his nurse. He was let fall from her arms and fell on a marble pavement. Terror led her to add to her fault by concealing it, and the poor baby died after four days' sharp suffering, which was attributed to every cause but the right one.

The King of Navarre's sorrow for the death of his heir took the form of anger with his daughter. He

charged her with having, through her neglect, caused the death of the two little princes. He solemnly threatened her that he would marry again, and that her inheritance would then probably pass to a son of his own. Jeanne then promised her father that if she ever had another child, she would come to Pau for its birth, and that her father's will should be law over its bringing up and nurture. The King was somewhat mollified by this promise, and in the year 1553 the time came for its fulfilment. The King determined that the coming grandchild should be brought up as a hardy Béarnois, and not "*mollement à la française.*" All this time Jeanne was in considerable anxiety as to her father's possible marriage, and the disposition he was making of his property by will. He saw all this and it amused him to perplex her and thwart her curiosity. He produced a small gold box which he said contained his will, and promised it should be hers on condition that when the pains of childbirth assailed her she should sing a Béarnois song. Jeanne accepted the extraordinary condition, and the great Henry of Navarre was born on December 13th, 1553, while his mother was singing the old Béarnois song appropriate to the emergency. "*Notre Dame, du bout du pont aidez-moi à cette heure.*" The King placed the gold box in his daughter's hand saying, "Daughter, this is thine," and folding the newborn child in the

skirt of his gown he added, "and this is mine." Tradition says that the child did not cry while the King performed the Béarnois ceremony of putting on his lips a clove of garlic, and moistening his tongue with a few drops of wine; and that on tasting the wine the baby "raised his head and otherwise testified satisfaction." A healthy peasant woman was chosen for the child's nurse, who proved faithful to her charge, and the baby escaped the perils of infancy and the misfortunes which had overtaken Jeanne's first two children.

The King of Navarre died when the little prince was about seventeen months old, and Jeanne succeeded to her father's kingdom. With her new dignity trials and difficulties came thick upon her. The beginning of her married life had been happy, but after seven years she had no more illusions about the essentially frivolous and unstable character of her husband. They were proclaimed King and Queen of Navarre; he delighted in the dignity, but thought more of its suits and trappings than he did of its duties and responsibilities. Navarre was the perpetual object of the intrigues and ambitions of the French court, and the weakness of Antony and his want of political sagacity encouraged Henry II. to think that the accession of the new sovereign would afford a favourable opportunity for maturing plans which had long been cherished for the merging of the principality of Béarn in the kingdom of France.

On the occasion of Antony's first visit to the court of France after becoming titular King of Navarre, all the arts of that most artful of courts were brought to bear on him to induce him to give up the independent principality of Béarn in exchange for an equal territory in central France. Antony had, however, not long enjoyed the title of king, and he was by no means disposed to relinquish it. He was, moreover, shrewd enough to know that the real decision would not rest with him, who was king only by courtesy, and that Jeanne's consent was more than doubtful; he therefore returned an evasive answer and requested leave from the King of France to confer with the Queen of Navarre on the subject. He left St. Germain, where the French court then was, and joined Jeanne at Coucy, but he was only allowed to do this on condition of returning with Jeanne immediately to St. Germain. Her indignation on hearing of the French king's proposal was boundless. She at once put herself in communication with Baron d'Arros, who had been placed in charge of the military forces of Navarre by her late father. She renewed his warrant in her own name, and gave him instructions with the view of defeating the French King's project should any practical steps be taken towards its realisation. She then presented herself with her husband before the King of France. Veiling her indignation at the proposal which was renewed in her presence, she took refuge in the

position familiar to us now as that of a constitutional sovereign ; she said she could do nothing without the consent of the States of her little realm. The refusal of this consent was a foregone conclusion. All Béarn was up in arms against the merging of Navarre in France. Jeanne's chancellor, who had been won over by the wiles of the French court, was the object of popular execration. His palace was burned, and he saved his life only by precipitate flight. The States met and voted reinforcements for all the strong fortresses of Béarn, and made the most energetic preparation to resist by force the carrying out of the French king's scheme.

Jeanne and her son, now a beautiful child of about two years old, were everywhere received with rapture by the people. Antony endeavoured to propitiate a similar loyalty by emphasising his sympathy with the reformed religion which had been established at Pau by Queen Margaret. Queen Jeanne, who afterwards became an ardent Calvinist, did not then sympathise with her husband's protestantism. She felt that in the crisis which existed everything should be done to unite her people as much as possible, and that religious differences might very likely be used as a powerful means of disuniting them.

A curious letter, dated August 22nd, 1556, is extant from Jeanne to the Viscount de Gourdon, one of the barons of Navarre, and an ardent Calvinist,

inviting him to a conference on the religious questions then so hotly in dispute. Queen Jeanne explained her attitude of indifference on these subjects up to that time in the following quaint manner:—

MONSIEUR LE VICOMTE,—

I write to inform you that up to the present time, I have followed in the path of the deceased queen, madame my most honoured mother (whom may God absolve), relative to my choice between the two religions; nevertheless, the said queen, being persuaded by her brother monseigneur King Francis I. of happy and glorious memory, my most revered uncle, not to puzzle her brains with new dogmas, after a time seemed to care only for humorous and witty romances. Moreover, well do I remember, that long previously, the king, monsieur my most honoured father and lord, hearing that the said queen was engaged in prayer in her own apartments, with the ministers Roussel and Farel, entered and dealt her a blow on the right cheek—the ministers having contrived to escape in great perturbation—while he soundly chastised me with a rod, forbidding me to concern myself with matters of doctrine: the which treatment cost me many bitter tears and held me in dread until his decease. At the present moment, however, free by the demise of the said monseigneur my father, two months ago, and incited by the example and the exhortations of my cousin, the Duchess of Ferrara,* it appears to me that reform is as reasonable as it seems necessary; so much so that I deem it disloyal cowardice towards God, towards my conscience, and towards my people to halt any longer in suspense and perplexity."

* Renée of France, daughter of Louis XII., a convinced Calvinist.

She concludes by urging that it seemed to her needful that worthy people should confer together upon the changes desirable to adopt in religion, and being apprised that in the Viscount were united wit, nobility and courage, likewise that he had about him certain reverend personages, she begs him to bring them during the next ensuing month of September to meet her at the Castle of Odos in Bigorre.

This was very far removed from the language of religious enthusiasm or even of religious conviction. Jeanne appears at the date of this letter to have looked at the whole controversy simply from the point of view of political expediency. She did not forget that a papal interdict laid upon Navarre in the reign of her grandfather had been the cause of the loss of the provinces of Spanish Navarre; she was interested in religious questions because she was convinced that an understanding of them was necessary in order to avert political dangers. Her language at a later period was very different. The conference at the Castle of Odos probably never took place. Jeanne became alarmed by the degree to which her husband openly espoused the Protestant cause, especially as his conduct called forth a letter from Rome threatening the little principality with the pains and penalties of an interdict. Her very feebly awakening interest in the religious aspect of Protestantism was checked. She forbade anyone to preach who had not obtained a licence from the

Bishop of Lescar. The Calvinist ministers appealed to Antony, but without success. Jeanne took the reins into her own hands and said she had no intention to hazard the remnant of her ancestral dominions for the sake of preachers and preaching. More restrictions on the freedom of Protestant worship followed in her principality, and the danger of an interdict was averted.

As long as Jeanne and Antony were together she had to provide discretion enough for the two. Thus on their way to Paris, on another visit to Henry II. in 1557, they stayed at Rochelle, a Protestant stronghold. On their attending the theatre, the piece performed held up the Roman Catholic faith to offensive ridicule. Queen Jeanne sat out the performance rigid as a statue, giving no applause whatever. King Antony, on the other hand, openly expressed his approval, took the company of actors under his special patronage, and presented each member of it with a considerable sum of money. The whole thing is said to have been a trap devised by the Guises to ensnare the foolish Antony and his consort. The Guises were becoming all-powerful in the court of France. Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Guise, the head of the family, and his brother Charles, the cardinal, formed between them a formidable alliance of practical executive energy with astute political acumen. The Duke was a great soldier; it is he who is known as "*le grand Guise*."

His face was frightfully scarred by wounds received when fighting against the English in 1546, but it was his son and not himself who received the nickname of "*le Balafré.*" The Guise brothers were supreme over the will of the French King, and they strengthened their position by the marriage of their niece, Mary Stuart (the Queen of Scots), with the Dauphin Francis. They were vehemently Catholic; and the forces of fanatical Catholicism had recently been strengthened by the accession of Philip, son of Charles V., to the crown of Spain. The Emperor Charles had publicly resigned in favour of his son, as far as Spain and the Netherlands were concerned, in 1555; a year later he retired into the monastery of Yuste, in the valley of Estremadura. As long as he lived he took the keenest interest in public affairs, and was always ready to give his advice to his successor. In 1558, however, he died, and thus Philip II., the narrowest bigot in Europe, was left, uncontrolled by any broader and more statesmanlike mind, to use the whole influence of his great position to extirpate heresy. It is well known that he sought to extirpate it by open warfare, by cruel persecution, by assassination, and by all the crafts and intrigues which his pettifogging character produced in such abundance.

The events of the marriage of the Dauphin to Mary Stuart and the death of Charles V., which both took place in 1558, gave a strong impulse

in France and Spain to the fanatical party intent on stamping out heresy at all costs. The death of Mary of England in the same year, though eminently favourable to Protestantism in that country, was used to heal the old feud and to strengthen the newly formed alliance between the anti-Protestant powers of Spain and France. The death of Mary enabled her husband, Philip of Spain, once more to use his own marriage for political purposes. In 1559 he married Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry II. and Catherine de Medici.

There had already been a secret conference at Peronne between Philip and the Guises, at which a league was formed for the extirpation of heresy. Philip pledged himself to support the Guises in France, and they pledged themselves to support the influence of Philip in their own country, and they were both to unite to stamp out Protestantism. The marriage of Philip with the Princess Elizabeth of France followed very shortly; and the political importance of the Guises suddenly received another startling impulse from the death of Henry II. He was wounded in the eye, in the course of a tournament given in honour of the marriage, and died eleven days after the accident. The King who succeeded was Francis II., a lad of about sixteen, married to Mary Stuart, a niece of the Guises.

Up to this point it had been the traditional policy of France, as the old enemy of Spain, to

support, nominally at least, the claims of the Sovereign of Navarre to the lost Spanish provinces. Jeanne had the mortification of seeing this traditional policy abandoned. Spain remained her enemy as much as ever, but France, under the Guises, had ceased to be her friend. Her little kingdom seemed likely to be crushed between the upper and the nether millstone.

Philip, as the son-in-law of one king and brother-in-law of his successor, was continually pointing out that the seeds of the Protestant heresy were sown broadcast in France, that scarcely any of the nobles, with the exception of the Guises, were free from the heretical taint, and that the measures taken for the extinction of Protestantism were rendered futile by the asylum offered to its leading supporters in the little kingdom of Navarre. In these difficult circumstances Jeanne, for the sake of the safety of her kingdom, humbled herself before the Pope. She had succeeded her father in 1555, but had never offered her homage to the Holy See. She now (1559) despatched a commissioner to Rome to offer apologies for the delay, and to proffer her homage. Great manœuvring was necessary to induce the Pope to receive her kinsman and ambassador, Pierre d'Albret, Bishop of Comminges. It is believed that the Pope would have continued to refuse the audience requested had it not been for the intervention of Catherine de Medici herself. This astute

lady had begun to find the yoke of the Guises very galling, and she sought to weaken their influence by strengthening that of the Bourbon princes. It was only with great frigidity that the Pope at last consented to receive the homage of the "queenly penitent." Jeanne's letter, which the Bishop of Comminges presented to his Holiness, gave an assurance that she had no intention of alienating the temporal possessions of the Roman Church throughout her dominions, and thus a temporary reconciliation was effected.

On the death of Henry II., Antony of Bourbon, King of Navarre, as first prince of the blood and next heir to the throne after the sons of Catherine, ought to have been associated with the Queen Mother as Regent for the young king; but the right moment for asserting his claim was let slip, and on his first appearance in public Francis II. announced that by the advice of the Queen, his mother, he had appointed his wife's uncles, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal, to govern the kingdom. The Guises, in anticipation of this declaration, had offered Catherine de Medici a junior partnership, as it were, if she would combine with them in keeping out the Bourbons, Antony, and his far more capable brother, Louis, Prince of Condé. She had assented, or appeared to assent; but she was by no means content to resign herself to the uncontrolled sway of the Guises.

She, however, carefully pursued her own ends; and her far-reaching schemes for undermining the power of the Guises were not long in arriving at maturity. In the meantime, however, the rival chiefly feared by the duke and cardinal was Antony of Navarre. Their ally, Philip, therefore caused it to be intimated to him and to Jeanne, that any attempt to remove the Guises from power would be instantly followed by the invasion of Navarre by Spain. While Antony was suffering paroxysms of indecision as to what course he should steer, Jeanne lost no time in visiting every fortress throughout her dominions to see that each was well stored with provisions and ammunition in the event of a sudden attack. Apart from his genuine hatred of the reformed religion, of which Antony was then the patron, Philip had solid political reasons for preventing him from being invested with the regency of France. This would have given him control over the military resources of that country and made his claim for the restoration of the Spanish provinces a far more formidable affair than it could become as long as he was merely King Consort of Navarre.

When Antony arrived in Paris to pay his respects to the young king, every kind of insult, small and great, was showered upon him by the all-powerful Guises. The rooms he usually occupied at St. Germain were inhabited by the Duke and Duchess of Guise, and he was told an attempt to occupy

them would cost him his life and that of 10,000 men. His baggage was piled up in the courtyard in a manner purposely designed to block up the way; he was denied his seat at the council table, and when he approached the King and the Queen Mother they scarcely deigned any sign of recognition. Baffled and perplexed, the King of Navarre asked leave to pay a visit to the tomb of the late king at St. Denis; and while he was there his brother Condé contrived to bring about a secret midnight meeting between himself, Antony, and Nicholas Throckmorton, the English ambassador in Paris. This latter delivered to the King of Navarre a message from Queen Elizabeth desiring alliance with him "for the honour of God," and to prevent their enemies "from injuring the cause" . . . "of true religion." Antony could not bring himself to accept with firmness the alliance thus offered; he returned to the court and accepted all the insults he received with irritating submission. Open threats were repeated in his presence that the Spanish King would invade Navarre if any opposition were offered to the predominance of the Guises; on the other hand, vague hopes were held out to him that the coveted Spanish provinces might be restored if he proved himself complaisant. Thoroughly complaisant he was; but this did not prevent Cardinal Guise from hatching a plot to seize Bayonne and hand it over to Spain, a conspiracy which was defeated only by

the activity and vigilance of Jeanne and the Baron d'Arros.

While Antony was compromising the independence of her kingdom at the French court, Jeanne was vigorously asserting it in Navarre. The next move on the part of the Guises was the appointment of the Cardinal d'Armagnac as inquisitor-general in the principality of Béarn and its dependencies. Executions were ordered and everything seemed ready for the inauguration of a bitter period of persecution. Jeanne foiled this scheme by informing the Cardinal Inquisitor that he was at liberty to make inquiry and to report cases of heresy to her privy council, but that she retained for herself, as sovereign Princess, all power of arrest and punishment.

On the Cardinal disregarding this, and causing Barran, a well-known Calvinist minister, to be arrested and thrown into prison, she instantly issued a warrant for his release, signed by herself under her great seal, and informed the Cardinal that such arbitrary acts were unauthorised and illegal, and would never be tolerated in her dominions.

But these spirited actions, away in distant Navarre, had little or no effect on the course of events in Paris, where the anti-Protestant party was predominant. Executions for heresy began to take place. Catherine de Medici herself was in some danger. Her orthodoxy was doubtful, and she was

watched by her daughter-in-law, Mary Stuart, who reported her observations to her uncles, the Guises. She felt herself to be a virtual prisoner, and only saved herself from becoming an actual one by apparent acquiescence in all the high-handed actions of the dominant party. At this time and for several years later Catherine was supposed to have sympathy with the Protestant movement. The Huguenots counted on her support, not recognising that she was essentially a Gallio in matters of religion. Such hesitation as she undoubtedly had of firmly allying herself with either of the rival religions, arose from her doubt as to which would ultimately predominate over the other. Her policy in religion was to support the strongest side.

Her immediate and most keenly felt wish in 1560 was to be relieved from the yoke of the Guises. Their insolence was passing all bounds. A Huguenot gentleman, named Gaspard de Heu, had been seized by their orders, without any form of trial, and strangled in the castle of Vincennes. No one felt safe. A plot was formed, to which Louis of Condé was certainly privy, and with which Catherine probably sympathised, to seize the persons of the Duke and Cardinal of Guise at Amboise. It miserably miscarried, and is sometimes called the conspiracy or, more contemptuously, the tumult, of Amboise. Condé immediately sought refuge in his sister-in-law's court at Nérac, whence



MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS "LA REINE DAUPHINE."

FROM THE DRAWING BY CLOUET.

Photograph by A. Giraudon, Paris.



he was summoned with his brother, the King of Navarre, by the young King Francis to attend upon him at Orleans to answer the charges brought against him. Antony was commanded to bring Condé with him, willing or unwilling, for, said the King, "should the said Prince refuse obedience, I assure you, *mon oncle*, that I shall soon make it apparent that I am King, as I have commissioned Monsieur de Crussol to explain to you both."

On receipt of this letter Jeanne strongly urged her husband either to remain where he was and await events, or if he went to Orleans to go with so strong an armed escort as to overawe his enemies. Antony, who has been well described "as foolish as fearless," did not take her advice. He was bent on going to Orleans at all risks. Catherine de Medici wrote private letters to him, assuring him that he would be in no danger, and persuading him to advance "with fearless courage." Both appeals touched him; but he appears not to have perceived their inconsistency. If there was no danger, fearless courage was uncalled for. The deeply seated suspicions and fears of Jeanne and of the Princess of Condé resulted in delaying, but did not prevent, the departure of Antony and his brother. The Cardinal of Bourbon, another brother of Antony and Louis, arrived at Nérac to express the displeasure of the King of France at the delay in their setting forth; he also delivered a personal message from

King Francis to assure the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé that they would be allowed to leave Orleans immediately after having faced their accusers. The Cardinal described the tears with which Catherine had bade him farewell and delivered to his sister-in-law, Jeanne, a polite message from the Queen Mother inviting her also to join the court at Orleans. This invitation Jeanne, on her own behalf, at once declined. She could not forbid the departure of her husband and her brother-in-law, but she felt that her duty lay in her own dominions, and in the protection of her children, of whom she now had two, a daughter having been born in February, 1559. As soon as the Bourbon princes had quitted Navarre on their way to Orleans Jeanne withdrew to Pau, where she called her thirteen barons in council. Acting on their advice she applied herself once more to the defence and fortification of her kingdom. She garrisoned all the strong places, especially those bordering on France, and awaited with the utmost anxiety news of the issue of her husband's journey. In the strong fortress of Navarreins, in which she took up her abode, she devoted herself to the education of her son, now a beautiful and intelligent boy of seven years old, and sought relaxation in the conversation of the cultivated and able men she gathered round her. It was during this period that her protestantism hardened into real conviction. She refused

to comply with the order, which reached her from the Privy Council of the King of France, to deliver up the persons of David, Boishormand, and Theodore Béza, and three other Calvinist ministers, that they might be put upon their trial for sedition. She revoked the permission she had given them to preach publicly in those domains which she held in fief under the King of France, and directed them to preach only in the principality of Béarn in which she reigned in her own right.

Antony of Navarre and Louis of Condé had set out on their journey with a strong escort, and as they went on their way, the Protestant noblemen of the south of France offered them a virtual army, amounting to nearly 7,000. Antony, with his usual vacillation, could not determine whether to accept or refuse. He became positively ill with distraction and anxiety; at Vertueil he received a message from the King of France ordering him not to approach Orleans with more than his customary household attendants. This order he determined at last to obey, much to the chagrin of his willing protectors, who warned him that he was yielding himself up with a rope round his neck.

The Guises fully intended to justify these fears. Their plan was to arrest and execute Louis Condé, and to assassinate his brother, the King of Navarre. The brothers reached Orleans on October 30th, 1560, and Condé was arrested on the evening of the same

day, charged with treason and with complicity in the conspiracy of Amboise. All the promises for his safety which had been made by and through his brother, the Cardinal of Bourbon, were so much waste-paper. Catherine alone stood between Antony and a similar fate. The trial of Condé was pushed forward with all haste; he was condemned to death on November 26th, and the execution was fixed for December 10th. Antony did his best for his brother, but he was warned on all hands that his own fate trembled in the balance. Cardinal Guise's design for getting rid of Antony was to admit him to an audience with the young king; and it was arranged that Francis was to appear to be suddenly transported with fury and to strike at his cousin with a poniard in an apparently ungovernable rage. Antony would probably defend himself, and then the King's attendants were to fall upon him and finish him.

Antony's behaviour all through this episode is the best thing we know about him. The plot was whispered abroad; indeed, the boy king seemed so pleased with his own prominent part in it that he could not keep his tongue still. Antony, therefore, at first evaded the interview to which the King invited him. When the terms of the invitation became too peremptory to be set aside, he accepted it with full knowledge of the risk he was running. He summoned a faithful personal attendant, and, telling him

everything, said, "If I fall, take my shirt stained with my blood to my wife. The Queen will avenge my death. Let her send the fragments of this shirt to every court in Europe, that its sovereigns may read in my blood how they ought to avenge the assassination of a King."

When Antony entered the King's presence he took the line of agreeing obsequiously with everything which Francis said, so as to give him no excuse whatever for an outbreak of passion. Cardinal Guise was heard to exclaim, "*Voilà le plus poltron cœur que fût jamais.*" Whether this referred to Francis or Antony seems uncertain. But it is certain that when it came to the point, the courage or the wickedness of Francis failed him, and Antony left the presence chamber unharmed.

Suddenly the whole situation was changed by the illness and death of Francis on December 5th. There was never a more dramatic transformation scene. With the death of Francis, the power of Mary Stuart and of her uncles, the Guises, was reduced to almost nothing. The new king, Charles IX., was only ten years old. Who so fitting to be Regent as his mother, aided by the counsel and support of the first prince of the blood royal, Antony of Bourbon? Catherine summoned Antony at once to her presence, and offered to make him Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, and therefore

master of all the military forces of France, if he would support her claim to the regency and forego his own. He had already been warned by the Duchess of Montpensier that only by agreeing to all Catherine proposed would he save his own life and that of his brother, still under sentence of death. He accepted and became henceforth a mere tool in Catherine's hands, which she used or threw away according to the convenience of the moment. The Guises were scattered; the Duke went to his castle at Joinville, the Cardinal to his diocese, Mary Stuart to Fontainebleau and afterwards to Nancy. Louis of Condé was released from prison and went to the castle of Ham in Picardy; his brother Antony was placed next to the Queen Mother in the highest position in the kingdom. Catherine de Medici, so lately scorned and slighted by the Guises, was mistress of the situation with no one to share her power but a man whom she reckoned she could twist round her little finger.

Everyone will wonder: did she kill her son? There is no evidence that she did. But Sir James Melville, a contemporary and eye-witness, wrote, "The Queen was blyeth of the death of King Francis, hir sone, because she had no guiding of him." With a woman like Catherine there was not a very long step between being "blyeth" of her son's death and murdering him. But she is entitled to the benefit of the doubt.

Antony of Navarre accompanied the Queen Mother to St. Germain, whence he wrote to Jeanne begging her to join him that he might have the advantage of her advice. She did not instantly obey the summons, but left Navarreins for Pau, not reaching Paris till August, 1561. Up to the accession of Charles IX., Catherine de Medici had never been in a position of real power. But now she had overthrown her rivals and the power so long sought was hers. As far as religion was concerned it long appeared almost certain that she would espouse the Protestant cause. The persecutions of the last two reigns were attributed to the Guises. By the influence of Catherine, Michel de l'Hôpital, sometimes called "the Bacon of France," a strong moderating influence in the war of religious opinions, had been made chancellor. Catherine had gone so far in the direction of Protestantism as to write to the Pope to request that all images of the saints, including those of the Virgin, should be removed from the churches of France, and that the Holy Communion, in both kinds, should be administered to the laity. During the Lent of 1561, Protestant ministers preached openly at the court, where fasting was entirely neglected. During the autumn of the same year she promised the Tiers-état at Poissy that she would bring up the young king and his brother in the reformed faith. There was a strong Protestant party in almost every province of France, and all

things looked as if the claim of the Protestants to religious freedom would be substantiated.

During this period, before she left Pau, Jeanne formally and publicly professed the reformed faith. She received the Holy Communion according to the rites of the Protestant Church in the cathedral at Pau, with the full consent and approval of the barons of her council. It was less than eighteen months since she had made a formal submission to the Pope, and had begged his forgiveness for the delay which had taken place in rendering homage to the Holy See for her principality. It may be said: If she was sincere in the one profession she could hardly have been so in the other. It must be remembered, however, that in the interval between October, 1559, and the spring of 1561, she had gone through a crisis in her life which may well have left its reflex upon her religious convictions. It may be also that when she submitted to the Pope she bowed before political necessity, and when that necessity was removed she reverted to the open expression of her real convictions. The little girl who had been severely beaten by her father, as a warning not to concern herself with questions of doctrine, was not so very far removed from the young queen of thirty-one who sought safety for her dominions in rendering homage to the Pope in words which found no echo in her heart. If this be the real explanation of Jeanne's inconsistency, no one can say that

it was heroic, but it was very human. Politics and religion acted and reacted on each other throughout the Reformation period, and nowhere more powerfully than in France. Was Queen Jeanne not the mother of the sovereign whose saying, "*Paris vaut bien une messe*," has passed into a proverb? From the time, however, that she made her open profession of protestantism, the Queen of Navarre never faltered in her faith, and she showed again and again in the last ten years of her career that her religion had become part of her life and was no longer a matter of political expediency.

When Jeanne arrived in Paris in 1561 she declined apartments in the Louvre, and took up her abode in the Hôtel Condé, her brother-in-law's palace in the rue de Grenelle. A great deal had happened since she last had seen her husband. The Queen Mother had spread her toils round the foolish Antony. Passionless herself, she knew how to work on the passions of others. She kept at her command a cohort of beautiful women, called "*l'escadron de la reine mère*"; one of these, Mademoiselle de la Limaudière, generally called "*la belle Rouet*," had been told off to the not very difficult task of captivating the King of Navarre and alienating his affections and fidelity from his wife. The Guises had now returned to court, and they deemed that their safest road to a return to power lay in alienating Antony from

Jeanne. The Spanish ambassador in Paris and the Papal Nuncio joined in the scheme, and Antony was induced by them to lend a favourable ear to projects which they laid before him for ceding the principality of Béarn in exchange for the island of Sardinia. They also induced him, who had been so hotly Calvinist in the earlier years of his marriage, seriously to reconsider the matter and to weigh well whether he would not do better for himself by going back to the old faith and an alliance with the Guises. Personally, politically, and religiously, therefore, Queen Jeanne and her husband were now at variance, and bitter words were exchanged between them. A little later the gulf between them was widened through the influence of Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, stepson of Lucrezia Borgia, who played upon the feeble character of Antony by persuading him that his marriage with Jeanne had never been legal owing to her previous contract with the Duke of Cleves. It was not difficult to persuade Antony that his marriage with Mary Stuart lay within the bounds of possibility, and that the triple crown of Scotland, England, and Navarre would then be an adornment worthy of the sagacity and courage of Antony of Bourbon. It did occur to him to inquire how, if he divorced Jeanne, he could still cling to the crown matrimonial which she had brought him. A ready answer was given. Jeanne was to be deprived of her dominions on account of the crime of

heresy, and they would then be bestowed upon her former husband. Antony said he would take a few days to think about it all.

The object of all these schemes was to make an unbridged gulf between Antony and Jeanne, to detach the former from the party of Catherine de Medici, and to annex him to that of the Guises.

Words are cheap, and Cardinal Ippolito D'Este, and his confederates did not spare them in working upon the ambition of Antony of Bourbon. They insinuated that if he would only make his peace with Rome nothing stood between him and the royal crown of France itself but the lives of three little boys in fragile health. If he was a Macbeth, they played the part of the witches to perfection, and set his foolish head aflame with unholy hopes and aspirations. But Queen Jeanne was stolid and solid; and no persuasions of Antony could stir her from her fidelity to the reformed faith or from her loyalty to her little cousins.

A triumvirate had been formed at Easter, 1561, consisting of the Constable Montmorency, the Duke of Guise, and the Marshal St. André; they were in close alliance and constant communication with the Pope and with Philip of Spain. Their object was the maintenance of the Roman Catholic faith, and, as an accessory to this, the restoration of the Guises to power. They were then apparently face to face with the almost immediate triumph of

Protestantism at the French court. Théodore Béza preached openly at St. Germain in the early autumn, and he was afterwards summoned to take part in an argument with Cardinal Guise. This conference took place in the apartments of Condé, where were assembled the Queen Mother, the King and Queen of Navarre, Cardinal Guise, and the Duchesses of Montpensier and Uzès. The argument was conducted with ability and dignity on both sides. Each, however, as is not unusual in such cases, claimed a dialectical victory over the other. This private discussion was only preliminary to a public tournament of a similar character which opened at Poissy on September 9th, 1561, and is known in history as the Colloquy of Poissy. The chief protagonists were again Théodore Béza and Cardinal Guise. Béza's speech was powerful and impressive, the Cardinal's was less argumentative, but concluded with an impassioned appeal to the young king not to forsake the religion of his ancestors. Special point was given to this appeal from the fact that the village of Poissy was the birthplace of St. Louis. There were some results of practical importance from this colloquy, but during the last few days of its duration it degenerated into unseemly wrangling. Everybody was angry, and neither party was convinced by the other.

The Protestant party had a powerful representative in Béza. His great learning and his good

birth gave him a position which he used perpetually to further the cause of the Reformation. He had completed the metrical translation of the Psalms into French, begun by Clément Marot, and they were sung at the French court and, indeed, throughout France, where they attained such popularity that they were called "Béza's ballads." Next to Calvin he was the most powerful personality produced by the Reformation in France, and for a short time it seemed that he would turn the scale in a direction which would have made France a Protestant country. The "colloquy" had given him the opportunity of making a formal statement of the principles of the Reform party, and of pressing the right of the Protestants to freedom of worship. The government of Catherine de Medici, at his instance, issued letters to the magistrates all over the country, directing them to interpret the edict forbidding Protestant worship in a lenient spirit. This virtually enabled the Protestants to meet without molestation. A great impulse was thus given to their cause, and there was, in consequence, a demand for the services of Protestant clergymen greater than Geneva could supply. On Michaelmas Day, 1561, Théodore Béza publicly celebrated the marriage, according to the Protestant ritual, of Jean de Rohan, a cousin of Queen Jeanne on her father's side, with Diane de Barbançon, niece of the Duchess d'Estampes. The King and Queen of Navarre,

Condé, Coligny, and many other influential persons, were present. This certainly had the effect of making the edict, published in the previous July, forbidding Protestant worship, null and void. The event was significant, and caused anger and dread in the papal party, and a corresponding elation and expectation of speedy triumph among the Protestants. The Spanish ambassador openly threatened Catherine de Medici that his master was prepared to interfere by force of arms to protect the Catholic cause in France.

Queen Jeanne found herself in a more and more isolated position. Her husband's mistress, "la belle Rouet," had lately borne him a son. She was directed by Catherine de Medici to put forth her utmost fascinations to detain and allure him. She was nothing loth; for if Antony divorced Jeanne, she had a chance, at any rate, of becoming Duchesse of Vendôme and of legitimising her son. The breach between the two Queens, Catherine and Jeanne, was widened by Catherine's treachery. Taking alarm at all she heard of Antony being about to throw himself on the side of the Guises, it is said that Catherine proposed to him that he should divorce Jeanne and marry her little daughter, Margaret, or Margot, then ten years old! Jeanne wrote a remarkable letter to her trusted counsellor, Viscount de Gourdon, dated January, 1562, describing the disappointment of her hopes with regard to the progress of the reform of religion, her fears for her

kingdom, and her grief for the disloyalty of her husband. She describes the hopes she had entertained in the early days of the new reign, and adds:—

“ Since which, however, the King of Navarre, hungering after the seductive flatteries of several fair damsels, dexterous and versed in toils for inspiring love, of whom the said Queen (Catherine) avails herself to accomplish and perfect her secret designs, the said King of Navarre, I repeat, has become so deluded and enervated, both mentally and bodily, by indolence and luxury, that he has permitted the Guises, assisted by the Constable, to regain the upper hand, to his great shame and the public calamity.” She then recounts Antony's willingness to give up Béarn, and the consequent danger to its political independence, and proceeds: “ My heart feels very heavy and sorrowful when I contemplate all that is concocting here in so sinister a manner. . . . Amidst all this woe, my soul, sad and perplexed, yearns to be counselled and consoled by a loyal friend. Come then to me here, or at least write to me what it appears to you I ought to do, and I will try to conform to your opinion.”

The Viscount in reply counselled Jeanne to submit to her husband in the matter of religion. Catherine preferred the same request with the view of inducing Antony to break with the Guises.

Jeanne turned a deaf ear to both these counsellors, declined reconciliation with her husband, and rejected with scorn all efforts to persuade her to abandon her adhesion to the reformed faith. Béza, in his history of the Reformation in France, states that she replied to Catherine, "Madame, if I at this moment held my son and all the kingdoms of the world in my grasp, I would hurl them to the bottom of the sea rather than peril the salvation of my soul."

Antony now publicly identified himself with the triumvirate, the party of the Guises. Jeanne was left quite unsupported. Catherine was seriously alarmed for her own safety. Condé and Coligny had retired to Orleans. The triumvirate took into consideration the desirability of Queen Jeanne's assassination; but shrinking from this extreme course they succeeded in persuading her husband to consent to her arrest and imprisonment. The warrant was prepared with his full concurrence. She never forgave this. "From that moment," she wrote in later years, "I closed my heart for ever against the affection which I still cherished for my husband, and devoted its every impulse to perform my duty."

The news of the intention to arrest and imprison the Queen of Navarre leaked out, and there was a great demonstration on the part of Huguenot Paris in her defence. Jeanne demanded permission to

depart to her own principality; after some hesitation this permission was granted, for it was intended to re-arrest her at her husband's castle of Vendôme. She left Paris in April, 1562, taking her daughter with her; but she was compelled by Antony to leave her son behind at St. Germain to be brought up in the vicious life of the court. Bitter must have been her regrets at leaving him. She had an interview with him before her final departure, when she solemnly adjured him to remain true to the reformed faith, and never to forget his mother. She also had a painful farewell interview with her husband, whom she never saw again. The intention to re-arrest her at Vendôme was frustrated by the tumultuous protection of a body of Huguenot troops who were poured into the town, probably at the instance of Condé. She regained her own dominions in safety, but not without a series of exciting adventures.

France was now on the eve of the outbreak of the civil wars on religion which lasted with occasional short interludes for thirty-six years. From a similar fate England was saved by the sagacity and statesmanship of Elizabeth. If Jeanne had been placed by birth in a similarly powerful position, she might have steered the ship of state as successfully as our great queen. But her tiny principality did not give her the place in Europe which Elizabeth occupied. Still, to the full extent of her power, she championed with fearless frankness, unswerving

tenacity, and ever prompt action the principles of the Reformation. She had considerable gifts as an orator, which had been cultivated by the public position she had occupied from childhood, and both by voice and pen she often roused her followers to the highest degree of enthusiasm. "To obtain for all men liberty of conscience, I am minded to do good battle, and not to relax my efforts. The cause is so holy and sacred that I believe God will strengthen me by His mighty power." With stimulating words like these she breathed life and strength into her party. She had been compelled to leave her dear little son in the power of her enemies. Her husband's mistress had constant access to the young prince. The natural chagrin and pain caused by this did not enfeeble Jeanne's resolutions, or impede her bold expression of them. Now and then, indeed, the queen is forgotten, and we hear the cry of the dispossessed mother. The little prince, when about ten years old, had a severe attack of small-pox, and throughout his illness called piteously, but, of course, unavailingly, for his mother. Jeanne despatched an urgent entreaty that her son might be given back to her. Her desire was unsatisfied, but a concession was made and the boy was removed from the guardianship of "la belle Rouet" and placed in that of Renée, Duchess of Ferrara. This lady, on the death of her husband, had returned to France





ANTONY OF BOURBON, KING OF NAVARRE.

FROM THE DRAWING BY MAURISSE

and was then resident at Montargis. Queen Jeanne, during 1562, issued letters patent establishing the Protestant religion in Béarn. She strengthened the fortifications at Navarreins, and mounted seventy large cannon there. Antony sent one of his secretaries to protest against her proceedings. Jeanne had him arrested and all his papers seized as soon as he entered her dominions. Fear of reprisals on the party of Elizabeth of England prevented either Philip of Spain or the Guises from despatching a punitive expedition against the Queen of Navarre. King Antony could only look on in amazement and indignation. Jeanne went her own way, but she smartly reproved Béza for omitting her husband's name from the liturgy prescribed for the reformed churches of Béarn.

Antony's death took place in November of this year, 1562. He was wounded, not very seriously as it was thought, at the siege of Rouen on October 25th. Imprudences and the gratification of his insatiable desire for display and dissipation converted a trifling injury into a mortal wound, and Antony was told by the Bishop of Mende that his end was not far off. His courage again redeemed him from contempt. He received the news with fortitude, made his will, left his horses to the Duke of Guise, and his fortune to his son; he also wrote a farewell letter to his wife. But his extraordinary vacillation clung to him to the last. He appears to

have wished to give Protestantism one more chance, and he vowed that if God restored him to health he would openly espouse the Lutheran faith. He thus, in his forty-fourth year, changed his religion, if religion it can be called, for the fifth time. He desired his physician, de Mezières, a Huguenot, to read him St. Paul's epistles, where the apostle expounds the duties of husbands and wives. When the verse was read, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands," Antony made a sign of cordial approbation; but the honest physician would not allow any slur to be cast upon Jeanne, "Yes, sir," he replied, "but the Holy Scripture also says, 'Husbands love your wives.'"

The Papal Nuncio, in a letter to Cardinal Borromeo, referred to the death of the King as a most lucky event; it relieved him of all anxiety on the subject of the numerous promises he had made without any intention of fulfilling them. Jeanne always suspected that her husband's road out of this world had been facilitated by the treachery of the Guise faction by whom he was surrounded.

During the civil war now raging in every province of France, the Huguenots, after some preliminary triumph, suffered sharp reverses. The towns which had been conquered by Condé were all reconquered, with the exception of Orleans, and Condé was himself a prisoner. The Duke of Guise,

while conducting the siege of Orleans in February, 1563, was assassinated by a Huguenot named Poltrot. The wars of religion in France were stained by every atrocity committed almost equally on both sides, until the balance was finally and completely overweighted against the Catholics by the hideous massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572. Catherine de Medici was and is suspected in regard to the murder of the Duke of Guise. Suspicion of complicity in it also lingers round the otherwise honoured name of Gaspard Coligny, Admiral of France. Mr. Whitehead, in his biography of the Admiral, carefully weighs all the evidence for and against, and arrives at the conclusion that Coligny was innocent; but it is an undoubted fact that the whole Catholic party believed him guilty at the time; that Guise's eldest son Henry, then a boy of thirteen, was with his father at Orleans and saw him die, and vowed an eternal enmity against the assassins, chief among whom he placed the name of Coligny. Crime produced more crime. February 3rd, 1563, in due time, gave birth to August 24th, 1572.

During the ten years of life which remained to the Queen of Navarre after she became a widow, she came to the front as an efficient sovereign and as a fearless and resolute leader of the French Protestants. One of her first acts was to reform the legal code of her dominions. She sought the

advice of the leading jurists of her time, and by their aid published a code of laws which provided a remedy for many long-standing abuses. The code was received with real gratitude by her subjects and remained in force under the name of "*le Stil de la Royne Jeanne*," until all ancient codes were swept away at the time of the Revolution.

She successfully resisted the renewed attempt to set up the Inquisition in her principality of Béarn; she established the Protestant religion there, and caused a translation of the New Testament in the Basque language to be made and circulated among her subjects. She organised her military resources to the utmost extent of her power, so that she was able to bid defiance to the powerful kingdoms lying on her northern and southern borders. All efforts to intimidate her were vain: "*A cœur vaillant rien d'impossible*" was the motto on which she acted and with which she constantly inspired her subjects to deeds of heroism. She was reminded by her enemies that her little kingdom was not like England "bound in by the triumphant sea." Her answer was to strengthen her fortresses and to rally all her subjects from noblemen to peasants to her standard. Plots were continually hatching to seize her and her children, and to hand them over to the Inquisition. Constant efforts, some of them successful, were made to raise the standard of revolt against her. Her husband's brother, the Cardinal of

Bourbon, was among those who joined the league against her. He attempted to withdraw from her the property which he had settled on her at the time of her marriage. He replied to those who remonstrated with him, "No ties of blood must be heeded; no deed must be thought too atrocious if it aid the extermination of heresy." She was cited by the Pope to appear in Rome to answer a charge of heresy. Failing to obey she was excommunicated, her marriage was declared invalid and her children illegitimate. She shared the honour of excommunication with Elizabeth of England; but like Elizabeth she knew that excommunication meant that every Catholic fanatic would believe himself to be doing God's service if he assassinated her.

She and her son were probably saved from assassination by the protection of Catherine de Medici. The Queen Mother of France was never run away with by her emotions, and she knew that the death of Jeanne and Henry would only place Condé and his son, both Protestants, in the place in the succession then occupied by Prince Henry of Navarre. The Cardinal of Bourbon was considered to be out of the succession, in consequence of his calling.

One of the hardest things which Queen Jeanne had to bear was the forcible separation from her son, which continued for more than three years after the death of Antony of Bourbon. It must have been

anguish to her that her beautiful and brilliant boy was being brought up in the inner circle of the most wicked and corrupt court in Europe. But whatever his faults the young prince remained thoroughly loyal to his mother. The Catholic League for the destruction of Protestantism had been formed, and Henry was allowed to hear plans discussed between the Spanish General Alva and Queen Catherine for re-enacting in France the massacre of the Sicilian Vespers. Alva advised the destruction of the leaders rather than that of the rank and file, and observed, "*Car, madame, une tête de saumon vaut mieux que cent têtes de grenouilles.*" Young as he was, Prince Henry recognised this as pointing at his mother, and he managed to convey a warning to her to be especially upon her guard.

Queen Jeanne at length, through a pardonable stratagem, contrived to regain possession of the person of her son. She appealed to the King, Charles IX., to allow her to take her son from the French court to receive the homage of her vassals in Picardy and Vendôme; and on receiving the permission acted upon it, notwithstanding the opposition offered by Catherine de Medici. Charles was just of an age keenly to enjoy showing that he had escaped from the tutelage of his mother. When Catherine intervened Jeanne appealed to the King's promise, and hinted that it was absolutely impossible

to believe that he would ever break it; thus was the adroit Catherine foiled. Prince Henry was only thirteen years old when he rejoined his mother. His beauty, vivacity, and intelligence delighted her. She endeavoured diligently to instil into him her own high conception of the duties of princes. "All earthly power," she argued, "was derived from God and was delegated to princes that they might maintain justice, succour the fatherless, widows, and orphans, and protect them from malignant men. Power is not given to princes to pamper and indulge their worldly pride, avarice, and vanity." Queen Jeanne was famous for her letters and speeches, many of which were printed and circulated all over Europe for the strengthening and encouragement of the Protestant cause. They often put new life and spirit into her followers in moments of despondency. Her first thought for her son as soon as he rejoined her, was to endeavour to wean him from the enervating luxury in which his last six years had been spent, to invigorate his mind by the study of serious subjects, to awaken his martial ardour, and to train him for distinction in military service. She was delighted to find him an apt pupil. When the time came in 1568 for him to take part in actual warfare, with her own hands she buckled on his armour, and witnessed his departure with unshaken courage. Ruskin has taught us that this buckling on of a knight's armour by a lady's hand in olden times was

no mere caprice of romantic fashion, but the type of an eternal truth "that the soul's armour is never well set to the heart unless a woman's hand has braced it, and that it is only when she braces it loosely that the honour of manhood fails."*

In the civil wars which were raging, Henry of Navarre soon justified his mother's dearest wishes for him. He showed himself, not only apt and valiant, but also ready to concede to his elders the leadership to which his birth in itself might have entitled him. If we may read between the lines of Jeanne's address to her son when he joined the army of Condé, we gather that she was in some anxiety lest the young prince should not loyally acknowledge his uncle's leadership. In this, however, Henry, completely satisfied her. He was a soldier born, and as such acknowledged discipline and obedience as the foundation of all success; he knew that the leaders must be men who have shown they can lead.

At the disastrous battle of Jarnac, in 1569, the Huguenots were defeated, Condé was taken prisoner and treacherously murdered. The Huguenot army was in profound discouragement, when they were roused to new spirit and hope by the Queen of Navarre. On horseback, with her own son on her right and the dead Condé's heir on her left, she rode down the lines, inspiring her own "high heart and lofty resolute spirit" into the whole army. Refer-

*"Sesame and Lilies," p. 105.



LOUIS DE BOURBON.

FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER A PAINTING BY FRAGONARD.



ring to the death of Condé, she said, "He died on the true bed of honour, and with greater credit to himself than to his enemies."

Continuing, she rallied the courage of the army with these words:—

"Soldiers, you weep. But does the memory of Condé demand nothing more than tears. . . . Does despair overpower you? Despair! that shameful failing of weak natures: can it be known to you, noble warriors and Christian men? When I, the Queen, hope still, is it for you to fear? Because Condé is dead is all, therefore, lost?" She then recounted the noble names of the leaders who were still left to them, and added: "To these brave warriors, I add my son. Make proof of his valour! The blood of Bourbon and Valois flows in his veins! . . . Behold, also, Condé's son, now become my own child. He is the worthy inheritor of his father's virtues. . . . Soldiers! I offer to you everything in my power to bestow: my dominions, my treasures, my life, and that which is dearer to me than all—my children!"

No wonder that her eloquence had an almost magical effect. The soldiers crowded round her and demanded to be led once more to battle. With the sudden inspiration which sometimes animates a crowd, they proclaimed young Henry of Navarre their leader. His mother signified her approval, and he was by popular voice chosen head of the

Huguenot party. His speech was short. He was, as he had said elsewhere, more ready to act than to speak; but every word was to the point. He said, "Soldiers! Your cause is mine. I swear to you on the salvation of my soul, and by my honour and life, never to abandon you." He was then sixteen years old; young enough, but one year older than the Black Prince was at Crécy.

Not long after this Queen Jeanne, still further to encourage her son's army, had a medal struck bearing the following legend, "*ou paix assurée, ou victoire entière, ou mort honeste.*" These medals in gold were given to the leaders, while copies in a less costly material were distributed among the soldiers. One of them in gold was found on Coligny's body at the time of his murder on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572.

A famous contemporary, the Huguenot historian D'Aubigny, in praising Jeanne, says, "Having of woman only the sex, with a soul given to things that rather became men, with an intelligence at home in great affairs, and a courage invincible in adversity," she inspired a feeling of admiration even among her foes. We should not to-day use D'Aubigny's words. Jeanne was a thorough woman, and was not the less so for her intelligence, sagacity, and courage, and the power of inspiring courage in others.

Some few more distinctively feminine traits have come down to us. She, like her mother,



JEANNE D'ALBRET, QUEEN OF NAVARRE.

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THE CASTLE, PAU.

From a Photograph by Alarcón, Paris.

delighted in flower gardens, and created them wherever she had the opportunity. One of her last recreations before leaving for her fatal visit to the court of France, in 1572, was to build in the grounds of the castle at Pau a picturesque little château for her daughter, Madame Catherine. The designing and decorating of this building, which she called Castel-Beziat or Château-Chéri, and the laying out of its grounds, provided her chief amusement during the last period of her life. Like all Calvinists she attributed great importance to preaching, and wherever she went was accompanied by quite a retinue of Huguenot ministers. With all her enthusiasm for the good cause, she found it, however, quite beyond her power to sit through their long sermons without going to sleep. She therefore asked the synod to grant her permission to work tapestry during the sermon. If it was simply human to sleep during the sermon, it was certainly feminine to resort to the tapestry frame to cure the inclination. A letter to her son written during the last January of her life gives us a glimpse of her home and home-life. She tells of the wedding celebrated the day before of one of her ladies, and says that her son's absence deprived her of most of the joy she would otherwise have felt in it. In the opening sentence of this letter she says how glad she is that "Pistolle has got her puppies."

When the valiant La None had his arm shattered at the siege of Fontenay, in 1570, it was Queen Jeanne alone who had influence enough with him to induce him to consent to its amputation. It was a tragic thing for a brilliant cavalry leader to sacrifice his right arm. But the choice was one of life and death. The physicians, however, were powerless to induce the brave soldier to face the fact. Where they had failed, Queen Jeanne succeeded, appealing to his loyalty to the cause for which he was fighting, his affection for his friends and for herself. His consent once won, Jeanne stayed with him during the operation, supporting him while it was performed, and cheering and encouraging him throughout the painful ordeal. It was she who had the artificial arm manufactured for him, which gave him his well-known surname of "Bras-de-fer."

So far from saying she had nothing of the woman but the sex, we should say that she showed the best and noblest type of valiant womanhood.

We now approach the last few months of her life. France was drenched with the blood of a long series of civil wars. Every sort of horror and crime had accompanied the footsteps of the armies. The court of France was hardly less distracted by strife than France itself. Charles IX., now, in 1572, nearly twenty-two years of age, has been described as "half beast and wholly a child." He was a beast in uncontrolled passion, but it is a libel on

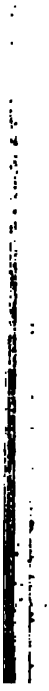


Charles IX. Roy de France.
Second fils de Henry II. et de Catherine,
de Medice né à St Germain en Laye le 27
Juin 1550. mort à Paris en 1574.

Malheureux conseiller de murdre et de carnage.
Qui laisse le contraindre des remords dans le flanc,
Voyez ce Roy mourir à la fleur de son age,
Regardez comme il rage,
Dans les flots de son sang.

CHARLES IX. OF FRANCE.

FROM AN OLD ENGRAVING.



children to call him a child. Mentally he was almost a *crétin*, but with enormous physical strength and activity. His mother still had considerable influence over him; she could work upon the worst part of his nature and rouse him to diabolical fury. He was subject to paroxysms of rage, which almost resembled epileptic fits in their exhausting effect upon him. He was furiously jealous of the military renown of his brother, the Duke of Anjou, afterwards Henry III., Catherine's favourite son, and the worst of all her bad brood. He was jealous of the young Duke of Guise, partly because his sister, Margaret of Valois, wished to marry him. The King absolutely forbade this marriage, and threatened the Duke with death if he persisted in his suit. To escape the scaffold the Duke hastily married Catherine of Cleves, then a rich young widow. Out of the plots and counter-plots, the furious anger, hatred, and jealousy of which these events were the outcome, came another scheme, "built in the eclipse and rigged with curses dark," the proposed marriage between Henry of Navarre and Margaret of Valois. Catherine de Medici represented to Jeanne that peace was necessary, and that nothing would promote the reconciliation between the opposing parties of Huguenots and Catholics like the marriage of Henry and Margaret. The proposed marriage of Elizabeth of England with one of the brothers of the King of

France was part of the same scheme. Elizabeth played with it to prevent, just on the eve of the Armada, the closer alliance of France with Spain. But the other proposed marriage was on a different footing. It had been one of the habits of Charles IX. constantly to praise Henry of Navarre to the disparagement of his own brothers. "Alone of all my royal house," he had said, "Henry loves me and I him." He therefore supported the marriage of his sister with "*mon bon frère Henri*," and said that he desired by means of this union to bring about, in a manner, the marriage of the two religions. The inclination of the principals was the last thing thought of. If Margaret ever knew what love was, she loved the Duke of Guise. Henry was at his worst in his relations with women. This fatal marriage has been described by Dean Kitchin as the union of "the worst of wives with a husband none too good."

When the proposal for the marriage was communicated to Jeanne, she was full of foreboding and suspicion. The brilliance of the alliance did not allure her; but she temporised, pleaded the absence of her son, and the consequent impossibility of consulting him. A special ambassador, Marshal de Biron, was despatched from the court of Charles IX. to press the advantages of the marriage upon Queen Jeanne. But he found himself powerless to remove her distrust and misgiving. On a former occasion friendly overtures from Catherine de Medici had

caused Jeanne to exclaim, "Can the Queen, who never pardons, pardon me?" and the same thought must have been in her mind when she parried the arguments of Biron in favour of the marriage of Henry with Margaret of Valois. Biron then turned from Jeanne to try his powers of persuasion upon Admiral Coligny, to whom he presented a most flattering letter from the King. Only three years earlier, the Parliament of Paris had found Coligny guilty of treason and condemned him to death; as he did not present himself for the execution of the sentence, it had been carried out on his effigy. His estates had been confiscated, his children degraded from their rank, and 50,000 crowns offered for his person dead or alive. But politicians have short memories, and easily forget what it is convenient not to remember. The admiral shed tears of gratitude when he read the King's flattering letter, and announced his intention of immediately acting on the invitation it contained to visit the court in Paris. Queen Jeanne, young Condé, and all the leading Protestants tried to dissuade him, but to no purpose. "No, no, madame," he said, "I firmly confide in the honour and word of my King," and henceforth all his influence was used to promote the marriage. Henry himself was favourable to it; all the conditions with regard to freedom of worship for the Protestants which Queen Jeanne asked for were conceded. She called her own Council of State, hoping they would urge reasons in opposition to the

marriage. On the contrary, they urged its wisdom, and Jeanne exclaimed mournfully, "*Hélas! je compte peu d'amis.*" Little by little she was forced to give way and to consent to go to Paris to negotiate the articles of the marriage. On no account would she allow her son to accompany her. She insisted on Prince Henry remaining in Béarn as her representative during her absence. Her last injunctions to him were to allow no solicitation to induce him to visit the French court unless he had received her direct authorisation.

Her design was, if she were forced to allow the marriage to take place, to arrange that Henry should be represented at the ceremony by proxy, and that afterwards she would conduct the princess to her bridegroom at Pau. Catherine de Medici would by no means consent to these arrangements. All Jeanne's other requirements were, after some resistance, agreed to. No stipulations at all were made by the French court, save the personal attendance of Henry in Paris for the marriage. Jeanne, in great perplexity, consulted the English ambassador, Walsingham, showing him how she saw danger every way, whether in concluding, or not concluding, the marriage. Coligny was completely captured, and thoroughly believed in the professions of friendship which were showered upon him. Jeanne's health began to show signs of breaking down, and her powers of endurance were further tried by the serious illness of her only

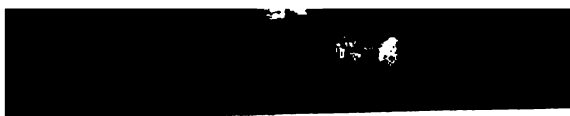
daughter, Madame Catherine, whom she had brought with her from Béarn.

At length, after nearly four months of weary negotiations, Jeanne consented to the marriage, and consented also to her son taking part in it in person; in doing this, however, she emphasised the importance of his coming to Paris with only a very limited number of Huguenot nobles and gentlemen. If she had lived, her prescience would have saved the Huguenot party from the trap laid for them. Queen Jeanne arrived in Paris in the last week in May, 1572, to make preparations for her son's wedding. In less than a fortnight she was dead. The suspicion of poison was universal among the Huguenots. The Queen of Navarre had, on her arrival in Paris, visited a large number of shops and warehouses, making purchases of jewels, clothes, etc., of suitable magnificence for the approaching marriage. Among other places she had gone to the shop of an Italian perfumer whom Catherine de Medici had brought from Florence. She purchased from him drugs, perfumes, and embroidered ruffs and gloves. It was rumoured, but never proved, that her death had been caused by one of those subtle poisons with the secret of which Italian chemists of the period were credited. Very shortly after her visit to the Florentine her dying illness, which lasted just a week, began. Her last thoughts and words were for her son and daughter, but she never spoke of the

approaching marriage. She desired that her daughter should at once return to Béarn. She saw Coligny on Sunday, June 8th, and named him as one of her executors. Her death took place in the morning of the following day. In one of her recent letters to her son she had described how she had sought an interview with Margaret of Valois, and had asked her if she had any message for the prince.

"Madame for some time made no reply; at length, on my pressing her for an answer, she replied that she would not send you any message without having first obtained permission, but that I was to present to you her commendations and to say that you were to come to the court; but I, my son, *I bid you to do quite the contrary.*"

With the death of Queen Jeanne, the protection which her prudent foresight would have afforded to the Huguenot party was lost. Coligny summoned Henry at once to Paris. Charles IX. continued to show the admiral every mark of respect and affection, addressing him as "*mon père.*" No suspicion of treachery arose in his mind; he therefore suggested no special precautions to Henry. The prince, after attending his mother's funeral at Vendôme, was delayed by illness from immediately proceeding to Paris, but he arrived there on July 8th at the head of 800 noblemen and gentlemen, nearly the whole strength of the Huguenot chivalry of France. They were being led as lambs to the slaughter, owing to the ill-placed, if generous, confidence of Coligny in the loyalty and good faith of the court and the Catholic League.





HENRY IV. OF FRANCE.

FROM THE PAINTING BY RUBENS, IN THE LOUVRE.

Photograph by J. Paris.

The marriage between Henry of Navarre and Margaret of Valois was celebrated at the great portal of Notre Dame on August 18th, 1572. It is said that Margaret refused to make any answer when she was asked if she would take the King of Navarre as her husband; and that King Charles, placing his hand on her head, forced her to incline it, which was taken as an equivalent to her assent. The next few days were given over to festivities in honour of the marriage; but Catherine de Medici and her coadjutors had laid all their plans for what immediately followed. It was intended that the signal for the murder of the Huguenots in Paris should be the assassination of Admiral Coligny. He was fired at on August 22nd, on his way from the Louvre, the shot proceeding from a house in the occupation of an adherent of the Guises. The shot was aimed true, but missed its mark through Coligny making a sudden unexpected movement in fastening or unfastening his overshoes; he was not killed, but his right forefinger was smashed, and his left arm severely wounded. He preserved the calmness of the tried veteran, and when all was in confusion pointed out the window where the smoke was as the one from which the shot had been fired. His assailant escaped. The crime had been planned by Catherine de Medici, her son, the Duke of Anjou, and the Duke of Guise. The news of the attempt on Coligny caused the King genuine sorrow. He visited the sufferer and ordered

every kind of vigilance for the detection of the criminal. Catherine became uneasy. She visited the King in his chamber. She there boldly avowed that she and the King's brother were the real authors of the attempt on Coligny, that she had done it to save the King from a great danger; there was a Huguenot plot, she declared, to destroy the Catholics, and the only way to prevent it was to be beforehand with them; to kill them before they had time to carry out their wicked schemes. At last she got her way. She worked her son up into one of the ungovernable furies to which he was liable, and he consented to everything. That afternoon, August 23rd, in the gardens of the Tuileries the treacherous crime of the St. Bartholomew massacre was decided on. The signal was given in the very early morning of Sunday, August 24th, from the belfry of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, almost the parish church of the Louvre. One of the first acts of the dark tragedy of St. Bartholomew was the cold-blooded murder of the wounded Coligny by the Duke of Guise, with every circumstance of barbarous and loathsome brutality. For three days and nights all Catholic Paris gave itself up to a carnival of blood. Men, women, and children were cut down. The Huguenots were chased into the river, and shot while trying to save themselves by swimming. The window of the Louvre is still shown from which the now almost maniac Charles shot at his subjects. Navarre and Condé were saved; they were of the

blood royal, but their followers almost to a man were murdered. It is estimated that more than 10,000 Protestants were murdered in Paris alone. Mr. Whitehead tells in his "Life of Coligny" how a priest, Father Panicarola, wrote enthusiastically to Rome, "Everywhere we have seen rivers of blood and mountains of dead bodies."

What had been done in Paris was almost immediately imitated in several of the provincial towns; though, to their immortal honour be it remembered, that in several cases the governors of towns refused, at peril of their lives, to carry out the infamous orders which they received from Paris. Well would it have been for the fame of the Catholic religion if a similar spirit had been evinced by the head of the Church, or by any leading representative of the Catholics. But this was very far from being the case. When the news of the massacre was told to Philip II. he laughed "for almost the only time on record." The account of the crime was received in Rome with transports of joy. The Pope, Gregory XIII., presented a gift of a thousand crowns to the courier who brought the joyful news. He wished to illuminate Rome, but was checked by the French ambassador because the news had not then been officially confirmed. When the news became official, through the receipt of letters from the Papal Nuncio in Paris, there was no longer any reason for holding back from the most open rejoicing over it and glorification of the crime.



RENÉE OF FRANCE.

"That same morning," wrote the Cardinal of Como, ". . . His Holiness, with the whole college of cardinals, went to the Church of St. Mark to sing the 'Te Deum' and thank God for so signal a favour shown to Christian people." The Pope said that the news was better than fifty victories at Lepanto. The guns of St. Angelo were fired, and an illumination of the city ordered. Another solemn "Te Deum" was sung, preceded by a mighty procession consisting of the Pope and thirty-three cardinals on foot; they visited the French church of Saint Louis, and the 101st Psalm was specially ordered to be sung. A papal medal was struck in commemoration of the massacre, and a series of frescoes, still to be seen on the walls of the Sala Regia of the Vatican, were ordered to be painted to put on record the joyful event. The paintings depict the attempted assassination of Coligny on August 22nd, and the throwing of his mangled corpse from the window of his house on August 24th. By every means in its power Rome made itself accessory to the crime of St. Bartholomew. The King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé were compelled to renounce their religion, and for four years the former remained virtually a prisoner in the Louvre. Often must he have thought of that passage in his mother's letter in which she sent him Margaret of Valois's message bidding him to come to Paris, and added, "but I, my son, I bid you to do quite the contrary."



RENÉE OF FRANCE.



RENÉE OF FRANCE,

DUCHESS OF FERRARA.

It is a truth so self-evident as to need no emphasis, that marriage forms an immensely important element in the happiness or the reverse of most men's lives; but that its importance is even greater in the lives of women. A man who is unhappily married generally has a business or a profession to which he can escape. But a woman who has a miserable home generally has no refuge but in her own thoughts, which too often only reflect, and perhaps magnify, her misery. Socrates, when Xantippe's tongue became unendurable, could betake himself with undisturbed equanimity to the market-place or to the gymnasia in the delightful surroundings of Athens, there to discourse with his young friends on "What is friendship?" or on the "Nature of the soul." But how can Mrs. Blue Beard console herself? If she sometimes and somehow finds an innocent way of doing so, it is infinitely to her credit. Religion, pure and deep, the centring of the soul on God, has been the unfailing consolation of many unhappy

wives. It was that of Renée of France, Duchess of Ferrara; and she added to the inward spiritual religion of the soul, the active, practical religion which visits the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keeps itself unspotted from the world.

The extraordinary marriage customs prevalent in the middle ages and during the renaissance among the reigning families of Europe are well exemplified in the history of Renée's father, Louis XII. of France. His predecessor was Charles VIII., the weak and worthless son of Louis XI. Charles VIII. had a long minority, during which his very capable sister, Anne of Beaujeu, "Madame La Grande," acted as Regent. For nine years she was virtually Queen of France, and as her brother approached manhood she managed to secure for him the hand of the great heiress, Anne of Brittany, thereby uniting the hitherto independent principality of Brittany with the realm of France.

Charles VIII. died childless in 1498, and was succeeded by his second cousin, Louis XII. Louis at the time of his accession was married already to a royal lady, Princess Jeanne, daughter of Louis XI.; but the risk of losing Brittany if Anne, its duchess, the widow of the late king, remained unmarried, or married a rival, was too great to be endured. Louis XII. therefore obtained from the

Pope, Alexander VI., a dispensation enabling him to divorce Jeanne and marry Anne. The Pope's son, Cæsar Borgia, was selected as the messenger to bring the papal dispensation to France. To honour him and to indicate the importance of his special embassy the King of France created him Duke of Valentinois, presented him with a large sum of money, and found him a bride from the house of Navarre. The marriage of Louis XII. with Anne of Brittany was successful in its political aim. It confirmed the union of Brittany with France; but Louis and Anne had no son who survived infancy, and at the time of Anne's death, in 1514, she left behind her only two daughters, Claude, then aged fifteen, and Renée, who was but four years old. In consequence of the Salic law neither of these was in the succession to the crown; but the elder, Claude, was married, almost immediately after the death of her mother, to the heir-presumptive, Francis of Angoulême, afterwards Francis I. The widowed king was heartbroken on the death of his wife, and desired her grave might be made large enough for two; but before the year was out he married Mary Tudor, the sister of Henry VIII. Louis XII. hoped through this marriage to leave behind him a son who would be his successor. But his hopes were vain; he died on New Year's Day, 1515. Francis, therefore, became king, and his wife

Claude, the heiress of Brittany, again confirmed the union of that province with the crown of France. The good Queen Claude, however, died in 1524, nine years after the accession of her husband, and the marriage of his little sister-in-law Renée became an important political topic. The Salic law did not prevail in Brittany, and the first thing which Francis I. sought to secure in the bridegroom-elect was that he should be a prince who could not make good any claims to Brittany on Renée's behalf. The suit of Henry VIII., who was moving in the matter of his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, was dismissed, not on any moral ground, but because he was too near and too powerful; a king of England with a colourable claim on French soil was no stranger to French history. The demonstration of friendship between Henry and Francis at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1524 did not influence Francis to bestow the hand of his sister-in-law, with her possible claims on Brittany, on the King of England. In 1527 Cardinal Wolsey came to Paris as special ambassador from the King of England, with instructions to propose that Henry VIII. should marry Margaret, Duchess of Alençon, the only sister of Francis I. This match was declined by the Duchess. "Never," she said, "speak to me again of a marriage which would take away the life and happiness of Catherine of Aragon." Wolsey





ERCOLE D'ESTE, DUKE OF FERRARA.

FROM AN OLD ENGRAVING.

had another string to his bow, and when he found that the marriage with Margaret was hopeless he proposed that his master should wed the Princess Renée. But though, as the old writer says, "there was nothing forgot which might doe him pleasure or honour," the match was declined.

The battle of Pavia had been fought and lost by Francis in 1525, and the life-long hostility between the King and the Emperor Charles V. was, at the time of Wolsey's visit, in its most acute stage. This circumstance also influenced the choice of a husband for Renée; and Ercole d'Este, eldest son of the Duke of Ferrara, was finally selected, partly because the duchy to which he was heir was too small and unimportant to enable him to make good any attempt to revive Renée's claims to Brittany, and partly because Francis desired to detach the Duke of Ferrara from allying himself with the cause of Charles V. in Italy.

Renée's marriage with Ercole d'Este took place at la Sainte Chapelle, in Paris, on June 28th, 1528. The splendid beauty of the ladies of the d'Este family was proverbial. Renée was plain and slightly deformed. Ercole was one of the sons of Lucrezia Borgia by her marriage with Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara; the d'Este family was on bad terms with the court of Rome, but had shown no leanings towards Protestantism. Renée, on the other hand, partly through the influence of her

cousin, Margaret of Angoulême, afterwards Queen of Navarre, and partly through that of her friend and governess, Madame de Soubise, was very favourably inclined to the reformed religion. Renée was, and through life remained, a devotedly patriotic Frenchwoman. When political questions arose she put France first and the rest of the world nowhere. Ercole, as was natural in an Italian prince, could not share his wife's political enthusiasms. He put the little dukedom of Ferrara first, and was ready to throw it into the scale either for Francis or for Charles according to the circumstances of the moment. There were, therefore, plenty of opportunities for discord between the pair. On the other hand, there were certain things which united them. Renée was the daughter of one king of France, and the sister-in-law of another. The marriage was a great match for Ercole from the worldly point of view. Renée had a large dowry, consisting of a quarter of a million of golden scudi charged against the Duchy of Chartres and the Viscounties of Caen, Falaise, and Bayeux. Besides these solid advantages, which doubtless endeared her to her husband, Renée had an alert intelligence, the natural qualities of which had been developed by a careful education. She was candid, thoughtful, conscientious, and above all generous with a regal generosity. Despite her plainness and deformity she was quite capable of royal dignity in





RENÉE OF FRANCE, DUCHESS OF FERRARA.

FROM THE PAINTING BY CORNEILLE DE LYON, IN THE VERSAILLES GALLERY.

From a Photograph by A. Giraudon, Paris.

her personal bearing. At the time of her marriage she was eighteen, and her husband twenty. The bridegroom, Ercole, as became an Italian prince of the renaissance, was a lover and patron of the fine arts and of literature. He formed the nucleus of the celebrated museum of Ferrara, and was a skilful collector, especially of medals. He encouraged the industrial arts in his principality, and was a great builder both of palaces and fortifications. He was tall and of a fine presence, inheriting much of the personal beauty of his mother, but effeminate and self-indulgent. He shrank from the personal hardships and suffering which military leadership would have entailed upon him. In short, he was as inferior to Renée in character as he excelled her in person.

Nevertheless, this inherent want of harmony between them did not immediately make itself felt. After the gorgeous festivals given in Paris in June and July to celebrate the marriage, the bride and bridegroom remained in France till nearly the end of September, putting off their departure on account of the plague, which then was raging in Italy. When at last they arrived on the other side of the Alps, one of the first pieces of news which reached them was that the Florentines, then fighting for their liberty, had chosen Ercole as captain-general of their forces. If he had had anything of the soldier in him, he would have eagerly seized

the opportunity for active service. But he was not a soldier. He may have been a diplomatist, for he tried both to accept and to decline the offer at the same time: that is, he nominally accepted it, but appointed another man to act in his place. He sent a deputy to do the fighting, and he remained and went on with his wedding festivities. "I have married a wife, therefore I cannot come," was his excuse for his indolence.

The inhabitants of Modena and Ferrara were bidden to banish from the sight of their young prince and his bride all signs of the mourning and desolation caused by the plague. Nothing was to be visible but mirth and jollity. All persons who had fled from the city to escape the pestilence were bidden to return, the bells were to ring, the markets and churches were to be reopened, the university professors were told to resume their classes. An order was issued that all black was to be discarded, and the inhabitants of Ferrara were bidden to array themselves in their gayest clothes. No measures were neglected to compel the appearance of rejoicing.

One wonders how long it was before the compassionate child in whose honour all this was done discovered the truth. The first impression she produced among the Ferrarese was, we are told, one of disappointment; they did not hesitate to call her "ugly and hunchbacked." But they were not

long in discovering that she was nevertheless "a real princess." Her gentleness, compassion, and generosity soon won the hearts of the Ferrarese. The circle which she made for herself in her new home was one where learning was honoured and encouraged, and she gathered about her some of the most famous men and women of thought and letters in Europe. Among these may be mentioned Bernardo Tasso, her secretary, the father of the poet; Clément Marot, the Frenchman, translator of the Psalms into his native tongue; John Calvin, who found an asylum at Ferrara before he established himself at Geneva; Rabelais; Vittoria Colonna, Marchioness of Pescara, the friend of Michel Angelo; Lavinia della Rovere, great-niece of Pope Julius II.; Bernardino Ochino, the great Capuchin preacher, of whose eloquence Charles V. had said, "That man would make the very stones weep." After an effort to reform the Church from within, he threw in his lot with the Geneva Reformers. There was also the learned Professor Fulvio Morata, whose brilliant daughter, Olympia Morata, was chosen by Renée to be the special friend and companion of her own eldest child, Anna, afterwards Duchess of Guise. Olympia joined the reformed religion, and before the end of her short life devoted herself entirely to its cause.

It will be gathered from the mere enumeration of this list that Renée very early showed her interest

in the reform of religion, and her determination to use her power to protect leading Reformers when the storm of persecution burst upon them.

When Renée was first married she was not Duchess of Ferrara, but the daughter-in-law of the reigning Duke, Alfonso; in him she ever found a friend and protector. When he died in 1534, and her husband succeeded to the dukedom, a new era in Renée's life began. Duke Alfonso had kept up a perpetual struggle with the Papacy. The popes of his time had persisted in their refusal to invest him with the Duchy of Ferrara. It is quite probable that this political conflict with the Papacy inclined him, without sharing in Renée's sympathy with the Reformation, to look leniently on the patronage and protection which she extended to leading reformers. One of Duke Ercole's first acts on his accession was to take steps to settle the question in dispute with Rome. In 1535 he went in person to Rome, hoping and expecting to have the matter adjusted to his satisfaction. Failing in this, he went on to Naples, where the Emperor Charles V. then was, and did homage to him for the Duchy of Modena. The result of the conferences between the Emperor and the Duke was that Ercole threw in his lot with Charles and abandoned his support of his wife's native country, France. It was largely a question of money. Both Pope and Emperor demanded

huge sums of Ercole before confirming him in the possession of his duchies. Rabelais wrote of the business—

“The Duke of Ferrara, who went to the emperor at Naples, return’d hither this morning. I know not yet how he has determined matters relating to the investiture and homage of his lands; but I understand he is come back not well satisfy’d with the emperor. I fear he will be forced to empty his coffers of those crowns his father left him, and that the Pope and emperor will fleece him at pleasure. . . . My lord Bishop of Limoges, who was the king’s ambassador at Ferrara, seeing that the said duke, without acquainting him with his design, has gone over to the emperor, is return’d to France. ’Tis feared that my Lady Renée will suffer no little vexation by it: the duke having removed Madame de Soubise, her governess, and ordered her to be served by Italians, which don’t look well.”

With the French ambassador in Ferrara withdrawn, and her French friends and attendants dismissed, Renée must have suffered acutely by the isolation in which she was placed. Some of those French members of her court who were not dismissed by Ercole, departed on their own initiative. Among these was Clément Marot, the poet. He had fled from France to escape persecution,* and he had no desire to court it in Ferrara. He withdrew to the independent republic of Venice, and there indited poetical letters to Margaret of Navarre describing the sorrows of Renée and the harshness

* He had been imprisoned in France for the unpoetical crime of eating bacon in Lent.

of her husband. Deeds of desperate daring may not be expected of poets, but it was not very chivalrous to run away and then call upon a lady on the other side of the Alps to come to Renée's rescue and "*Console-la.*" At a safe distance from Ercole, Marot could write at his ease, "*O dur mari, rempli de violence,*" and thus adjure Margaret of Navarre—

"Ha, Marguerite! écoute la souffrance
 Du noble cœur de Renée de France,
 Puis comme sœur plus fort que d'esperance
 Console-la.
 Tu sais comment hors son pays alla
 Et que parens et amis laissa là
 Mais tu ne sais quel traitement elle a
 En terre étrange."

and so on for pages of neatly turned stanzas.

Calvin's friendship was of a very different character. He arrived in Ferrara early in the same year when Clément Marot quitted it. He journeyed thither, Dr. Fairbairn believes, in the hope of mitigating, by the help of Renée, the severity of the persecution of his co-religionists which was then beginning in France. He came under an assumed name—Charles d'Espeville—and by his ministrations and exhortations put new strength into the little band of reformers who gathered about Renée. He administered the Holy Communion to them in private, and sustained and elevated their minds to the point of bearing persecution for the sake of liberty of conscience.

Renée did not openly separate herself from the Church of Rome; but she absented herself from mass and from confession, and heard the services and sermons of the reformers in her own apartments. She was deeply impressed by the teachings of Calvin: his intensity of conviction and his absolute uprightness of conduct were a passport to her respect. The officers of the Inquisition were on his track in 1536, the date of his first visit to Ferrara, and he was arrested. While being conducted as a prisoner from Ferrara to Bologna his guards were overtaken by a company of armed men, who rescued him and set him at liberty. It is generally believed that the Duchess Renée was the real author of this rescue.

From this time forth Calvin frequently corresponded with the Duchess, and continued till his death to exercise great influence upon her mind.

Renée's home-life grew more and more difficult. Her husband was becoming increasingly subservient to the Papacy, while she was becoming absolutely emancipated from it. He identified himself in politics with the cause of Charles V., while she remained heart and soul for France. She had in all five children—Anna, born in 1531, Alfonso in 1533, Lucrezia in 1535, Leonora in 1537, and Luigi in 1538. Their nurture and education must have been a source of disagreement rather than of union

when there were such fundamental differences between their parents.

Notwithstanding the ill-success of his mission to the Pope in 1535, Ercole had a little later, and perhaps by the aid of the golden crowns referred to by Rabelais, induced the Pope to receive his homage and recognise him as a vassal. In 1543, taking the opportunity of the Pope making a journey from Reggio to Bologna, Duke Ercole invited his Holiness to turn aside to pay a visit to Ferrara. Some idea of what this meant may be gathered from the fact that the Pope's suite consisted of 3,000 persons, including eighteen cardinals and forty bishops. One hundred and forty apartments in the ducal palace of Ferrara were placed at the disposal of the Pope and the most distinguished members of his retinue. On the Pope's arrival he was met by young Alfonso, the heir of the dukedom, accompanied by eighty noble youths all clad alike in crimson silk, velvet and gold. The young prince presented his Holiness with the keys of the city in a golden basin. He then kissed the Pope's feet, prostrating himself on the ground. The Pope returned the keys and gave the prince his blessing. Nothing was left undone to show honour and submission to the Pope. The Duchess Renée, attended by seventy-two noble ladies, also came out to meet him, and on the following day the Pope celebrated mass in the cathedral. After this he presented the Duke Ercole with the golden rose in





JOHN CALVIN.

FROM THE PAINTING BY R. HOUSTON.

token of complete reconciliation, and the Duke made obeisance and kissed the feet of the Pontiff. Renée was present at this ceremony, though her feelings in respect to it must have been well known. The five children of Ercole and Renée in the evening took part in acting a Latin comedy by Terence in the presence of the Pope and his suite. The Pope on his departure bestowed rich gifts upon them and upon Renée. His Holiness had only a few weeks previously signed the bull which established the Inquisition in Italy, and it is probable that neither he nor Renée was unaware that he only awaited a favourable opportunity to let her taste its rigours in her own person. He on this occasion gave her a brief which exempted her from all Roman jurisdiction except that of the Inquisition.

Renée was in the unfortunate position of being torn in two contrary directions. Her interests and domestic peace and happiness drew her one way; her convictions and the influence of Calvin drew her another way. Calvin had to the full the clear and logical qualities of the French mind. He could not see that Renée, being a convinced believer in the principles of the Reformation, had any excuse for concealment or compromise. His own personal history had been one of unhesitating sacrifice of everything for the sake of maintaining what he believed to be the truth. Born at Noyou, in the north of France, in 1509, he had been sent at fourteen years

of age to Paris for his education. His father at first intended him for the church, but after three years changed his views, and sent Calvin at the age of seventeen to study law in the University of Orleans. At the age of twenty-three Calvin produced his first work—a commentary on Seneca's "De Clementia." It contains, says Dr. Fairbairn, conclusive evidence of Calvin's finished scholarship, but not a trace of religious enthusiasm. It showed him to be a scholar, a moralist, and a jurist, with political ideas far in advance of his age.

"He bids monarchs remember that their best guardians are not armies or treasuries, but the fidelity of friends and the love of subjects. Arrogance may be natural in a prince, but it does not therefore cease to be an evil. A sovereign may ravage like a wild beast, but his reign will be robbery and oppression, and the robber is ever the enemy of man. Cruelty makes a king execrable; and he will be loved only as he imitates the gentleness of God. And so clemency is true humanity; it is a heroic virtue, hard to practise, yet without it we cannot be men."*

This is all very good sense, and although in advance of current thought when it was written, has now, in Western Europe at all events, almost passed from truth to truism. The next year saw a great development in Calvin's mind. He had witnessed in Paris the union in high quarters of religious fanaticism with flagrant immorality. He had also

* Rev. A. M. Fairbairn, D.D., Vol. II., "Cambridge Modern History," p. 353.

witnessed in intimate personal friendship the greater purity and integrity of the reformers. He had seen "Captive good attending Captain ill." He knew the character and aims of the men who were burned at the stake for conscience' sake, and the character and aims of the men who burnt them. He no longer had any choice; he was forced to become a reformer and a Protestant. He was the real author of the address given by Nicholas Cop as Rector of the University of Paris on November 1st, 1533. It shows the awakening in the mind of its author of religious enthusiasm. It was full of the influence of Luther and Erasmus. Persecution for conscience' sake had already begun in Paris, and very soon after the delivery of the address both Calvin and Cop had to fly for their lives. Calvin resigned all his offices, and became henceforth an exile and a wanderer. He formally and definitely renounced the Roman Catholic religion, and allied himself with the reformers. His first city of refuge was Bâle, which had for so many years sheltered Erasmus, and where his works had been printed by his friend John Froben. In Bâle Calvin wrote his next work, the "Institutio," with a noble prefatory letter addressed to Francis I. Dr. Fairbairn says of it—

"It is one of the great epistles of the world, a splendid apology for the oppressed and arraignment of the oppressors. It does not implore toleration as a concession, but claims freedom as a right. Its author is a young man of twenty-six, yet he speaks with the gravity

of age. He tells the king his first duty is to be just; that to punish unheard is but to inflict violence and perpetrate fraud."

He speaks as a subject to his sovereign, but "as a subject who knows that his place in the State is as legal, though not as authoritative, as the sovereign's."

We have seen how in 1536 Calvin's wanderings led him to the court of the Duchess of Ferrara, and it is not difficult to picture the deep impression which his earnest, dignified character made upon her and her circle. Henceforth, in his correspondence with her, he was constantly addressing himself to the task of keeping her up to the patient endurance of the wrongs and sufferings involved by the open profession of the reformed religion. She was in a very difficult position. Her mind was wholly convinced that the reformed religion was pure and acceptable to God; yet, lest she should entirely break with her husband, and be separated from her children, she desired to conform outwardly to Roman Catholic rites. She desired to hear mass in public, and then afterwards to receive the Holy Communion in her own apartments in private. A Calvinist preacher, Master François, attached to the household of the Duchess, had advised her that this was permissible. Calvin would have none of it. In a letter of many pages, probably written in October, 1540, he denounces Master François as "a wolf in

sheep's clothing who, with feigned words, made merchandise of the Divine Word; one who sought the honour which cometh from men, who was ready either to declare the truth or to conceal it, for filthy lucre's sake." He begs her not to believe for a moment that he has been incited to write by any of her household:—

"I assure you, before God, that I do so without being requested by anyone. . . . On the other hand, I would rather desire to be cast into the lowest depths of the abyss than to twist about or wrest the truth of God to make it suit the hatred or to procure the favour of any creature whatsoever. But what makes me speak out is that I cannot bear that the Word of God should be thus to you concealed, perverted, depraved, and corrupted in such essential things, by those in whom you have some confidence, to whom you have given authority."

However deeply Renée may have been moved by this letter, she did not conform to its demands. She refused to attend mass or go to confession, but she did not commit herself to a total breach with the Church of Rome. We have already seen that when she received the Pope Paul III. as her guest in 1543, she was present at the mass celebrated by the Pontiff in the cathedral of Ferrara. There must, up to 1548, have been an understanding between Renée and her husband that she would be allowed religious liberty as long as she did not openly renounce the Roman Catholic faith. Calvin condemned this compromise, but if Renée continued to bow her knee in

the house of Rimmon she may have consoled herself with the remembrance that however sternly Calvin might judge her, Elisha had, under similar circumstances, gently bidden his convert "go in peace."

But this outward conformity with the ceremonies of the dominant church did not permanently protect Renée from persecution. In 1547 Francis I. died, and his sister, Margaret, Queen of Navarre, also died in the following year. As long as they lived they were powerful protectors of Renée. Francis cared nothing for any religion, but he cared for his sister, and she was very sympathetic with the Protestant cause. Margaret was Renée's friend. They had been brought up together, and Renée had derived her first interest in the reformed religion from the lips of Margaret. Francis, through inherent instability of character, had only permitted persecution of the French Calvinists by fits and starts, and through affection for his sister had never allowed it to extend into royal circles.

But all this was changed when Francis I. was succeeded by Henry II., who, under the guidance and influence of Diana of Poitiers and of the Guises, supported the Inquisition in France and inaugurated a much severer and more searching persecution than had been known there during the reign of Francis.

The change in France had its reflex effect upon Ferrara. The Inquisition was established there in



HENRY II.

FROM THE PAINTING BY CLOUET.

Photograph by X. Paris.



1548, and an era of cruelty and misery began. Olympia Morata was driven in unmerited disgrace from the court, and in some unexplained way the anger of the Duchess Renée was inappeasably aroused against her. Olympia was obliged to fly precipitately, not even taking her dresses and ornaments with her, from the court which had been her home from childhood. What slander of Olympia Renée was forced to believe will probably never be discovered. All that is known of Olympia redounds to her credit. She was not less famous as a scholar than as a devoted wife and daughter. Her pupil, Anna d'Este, Renée's eldest daughter, had just been married to the Duke of Guise, so that she was not in Ferrara to plead for justice for her friend. Olympia wrote to the Duchess of Guise from Heidelberg, in 1554, in terms implying unbroken affection. It may therefore be assumed that whatever the cause of the estrangement between Renée and Olympia, the Duchess of Guise did not share with her mother in the alienation from her former friend.

The Duke Ercole was urged on to persecute and torment those in his dominions who favoured the reformed religion. The first martyr was a young man named Fannio. He had studied the Bible eagerly, through an Italian translation, and he could not keep what he learned there to himself. He was always talking, preaching, teaching, and making converts. He was thrown into prison. The

entreaties of his wife and sister caused him to recant in order to save his life. But when he had saved his life he felt that he had lost it, and once more he resumed his preaching; he was again arrested and sent in chains to Ferrara. He was for two years in prison there, and was visited by Olympia Morata and by Lavinia della Rovere, on whom his confident faith and resolute cheerfulness made a deep impression. Renée interceded for him with Rome, but to no avail. He was condemned by the Inquisition as a relapsed heretic and sentenced to death. The condemnation was confirmed by the Duke Ercole, and Fannio was strangled on August 22nd, 1550: his body was afterwards burned and the ashes thrown into the river. Other martyrdoms followed; and the Pope and the Inquisition constantly urged the Duke to deal with heresy in his own household, and especially in the person of his Duchess. If Henry II. had resembled his father he might have been depended on to protect his own flesh and blood. But he was all for rooting out heresy by the active persecution of heretics, even when the victim was his own mother's sister. In 1554 Duke Ercole applied to Henry II. to send him an "able and energetic" teacher to turn the Duchess from the error of her ways. In a long letter written by King Henry in reply, he appointed the Inquisitor, Mathieu Ory, for this purpose; he dwelt on the inexpressible grief, sorrow, and annoyance he had felt

on learning that his "only aunt" had suffered herself to be led into the labyrinths of these unhappy opinions; he said that these opinions involved nothing less than "the loss of the bodily and spiritual life of his aunt," whom he had always so much loved, esteemed, and honoured, "and doth singularly still." King Henry further reminded his aunt that one of the greatest favours which God had granted to her was "being the issue of the purest blood of the most Christian house of France, *where no monster has ever existed.*" If she continued to reject the holy Catholic faith, it would displease him, the King said, as much as anything in the world, and would cause him entirely to forget the friendship and all the observances and demonstrations of a good nephew. He therefore advised and commanded if the said lady should finally remain obstinate and pertinacious in such errors, that the "said duke should cause the said lady to be put into a place secluded from society and conversation, where she may henceforth injure no one but herself, taking from her her own children, and the whole of her family entirely, of whatever nation they be, who shall be found burdened with, or be vehemently suspected of, the said errors and false doctrines, that they may be put on their trial; the said Ory being sent for, who is experienced in such matters belonging to his profession, he being Inquisitor of the faith in this kingdom."

The concluding paragraph of the letter recommended that exemplary punishment be awarded to all who had encouraged the Duchess in her heresies, and that the Duke should subject them to such "executions and procedures. . . that justice may take effect without scandal or notoriety." No one will quarrel with Henry's expression that his love and esteem for his aunt was very singular in its manifestations.

As long as the Inquisitor confined himself to arguments and persuasion, Renée stood her ground. She was not convinced, and would not feign the conviction she did not feel. The first practical measure taken against her was to dismiss all the suspected members of her household. The Duke sent his own confessor to her, but he was as unsuccessful as Ory had been. Then the decisive step was taken. The Duchess Renée was condemned to imprisonment in the castle of Ferrara. She was allowed two attendants, but no books; she was entirely cut off from the outside world and from her children. Her two younger daughters were sent to a convent, where it was expected that the effects of Renée's heretical training would be counteracted.

The poor Duchess did not hold out for more than six days. Twenty-four of her servants had been sentenced at the same time with herself. "The executions and procedures . . . without scandal or notoriety," as recommended in the letter of the King

of France, probably meant being strangled in prison without trial. Whatever mitigation of extreme penalties might be reserved for the Duchess, as a king's daughter, no similar leniency could be expected for her servants. She gave way and "received pardon." She pretended to believe what she did not believe, and saved the lives of her servants; she was restored to liberty and to her children. On the same day on which she was released she supped with her husband; on the next day her younger children were given back to her, and her eldest son Alfonso returned from Flanders. She remained at heart a Calvinist, but attended mass and in other ways conformed to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of Rome.

The news of her abjuration quickly spread among the reformers in various parts of Europe. Calvin seems to have judged her less harshly than might have been anticipated. He wrote to one of his friends from Geneva, November 1st, 1554: "There is sad intelligence, and more certain than I could wish, of the Duchess of Ferrara; that, overcome by threats and reproaches, she has fallen. What shall I say, except that instances of fortitude in nobles are rare?"

Some changes for the better took place in Renée's position soon after her recantation; first there was the return of her eldest son. Young Alfonso had had a quarrel with his father, and might on that

account, although a reconciliation had been effected, have proved by his mere presence somewhat of a protection to his mother. The chief public events in Europe in 1555-6 did Renée no ill service. In 1555 Paul IV. became pope. He was a vehement supporter of the Inquisition, and had himself filled the office of Grand Inquisitor before his pontificate. In 1556 Philip II. succeeded his father as King of Spain, which meant that the most narrow-minded bigot in Europe could now support his bigotry with the resources of a powerful kingdom. It might appear that these two accessions were unfavourable to the cause of the Reformation, but the event proved otherwise. Paul IV. was a Neapolitan, and as a Neapolitan hated with a deadly hatred the Spaniards who were the masters of his native city. The new pope and the new king therefore were at odds, and soon they were at war. Paul IV. induced Henry II. of France and Ercole, Duke of Ferrara, to join him as allies, and although the armies of Philip II., under the generalship of the Duke of Alva, were victorious, yet the renewed alliance between France and Ferrara must have been consolatory to the ever-constant patriotism of the Duchess. The Duke of Guise, the son-in-law of Ercole and Renée, commanded the armies of France during this short war. He was recalled to France to repair the disaster to French arms at the battle of St. Quentin, but he left his soldiers behind him to

the number, says Brantôme, of 10,000 in a terribly destitute condition. They were rescued by the princely generosity of Renée. When her steward remonstrated with her about the expense incurred, she replied, "What would you have me do? These are poor Frenchmen and my countrymen, who, if God had given me a beard on my chin would have been my subjects." She was not quite correct, for it was her sister, not herself, who would have succeeded to the throne of France but for the Salic law; but the anecdote illustrates Renée's attitude towards her native country, her inextinguishable love for it, and her instinctive translation of emotion into practical action.

There is no reason to suppose that the religious change in Renée went beyond outward observances. She kept up her correspondence with Calvin, and his letters to her after the date of her recantation, while stimulating her to greater courage, show no trace of any doubt as to the steadfast character of her faith in the reformed doctrines.

"I beseech you, madame," he wrote in 1558, "at whatever cost, to persevere in being daily taught in the school of our Lord Jesus Christ, as in fact you know well enough, without being admonished by others that you have need to be, especially at a time when the devil is stirring up all the vexations he can in order to make you turn away from it. . . . Only, madame, take courage; yield not to Satan the vantage which he looks for of finding you unprepared. . . . Even were the condition of the children of God a hundred times harder than it is, not a

thought should be entertained of abandoning the good to which God by His infinite goodness has been pleased to call us."

In the same letter he alludes to her "domestic vexations," and a little rashly counsels her to model her conduct on that set down in the 101st Psalm, where David so confidently says he will not know a wicked person, and that he will soon cut off all the ungodly out of the land. That was the very spirit which animated the authors of the Inquisition,* and from which both the Duchess and her adviser had suffered so cruelly. But Renée's "domestic vexations" were about to be brought to an unexpected end. In 1559 Henry II. was accidentally killed in a tournament which was held to celebrate the marriage of his daughter with Philip of Spain; and, within less than three months death also claimed Ercole, the Duke of Ferrara. The nephew who had shown his "so singular affection" for his aunt as to advise her imprisonment, and the husband who had acted on the advice were now cut off. Renée's son became the reigning duke. He was away in Paris at the time of his father's death. Henry II. had, in fact, on receiving his mortal wound, fallen into the arms of Prince Alfonso; Renée's youngest son, Luigi, was also in France; the Cardinal Ippolito, the late Duke's brother, was in Rome. Renée there-

* It was this psalm which the Pope, Gregory XIII., ordered to be chanted after the Te Deum in Rome at a thanksgiving service for the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew (see p. 244).

fore became Regent until the return of her son. At first all seemed to promise well for a period of greater domestic happiness than any she had enjoyed since her alienation from her husband. The new duke sent most affectionate messages to his mother, and when he returned to Ferrara slipped away from the pomp and ceremonial of his public reception by the nobles in order to pay her a private visit. Acts of mercy graced his accession, and he conferred favours on the city and state of Ferrara. He also showed that he shared in no mean degree the enthusiasm for learning and the arts which distinguished so many of the Italian princes of the renaissance. He ordered that the library at Ferrara should be provided, at whatever cost, with every book which had ever been printed.

But Renée's pride and satisfaction in her son's reign were not destined to be of long duration. On the visit of Alfonso II. to Rome, in 1560, to do homage to the Pope for his dukedom, Pius IV. reproached him with the heresy of his mother. She was not only a heretic herself, but the protector of heretics. The Inquisition could not have free scope for its activities while Renée remained at Ferrara. On his return Alfonso gave the alternative to his mother, either once more to abjure the reformed faith or to leave Ferrara and Italy. She chose the latter course, and in September, 1560, she left the city which had been her home for thirty-two years

to return to her native land. Alfonso did not allow his mother to depart without showing her strong marks of undiminished affection and respect. Her younger son, Luigi, then aged twenty-two, accompanied her to her new home, and the Duke Alfonso, with a train of three hundred ladies and cavaliers, attended her on her journey as far as the frontier of his dominions. The people of Ferrara mourned her departure, as well they might, for she had ever been the generous protector of those who most needed her aid; but it was not only as a Lady Bountiful that they missed her. Her departure was a symptom that henceforth the Papacy and the Inquisition would work their will unchecked in both Ferrara and Modena. Burnings, torture, and every kind of mental and physical anguish were used to root out heresy. In one year, not long after Renée's departure from her son's dominions, there were fourteen people—thirteen men and one woman—burned alive in Modena alone.

The last stage of Renée's life opens with her return to France, in 1560. She first joined the French court during its sojourn at Orleans, on November 7th, 1560. The stirring events which were there taking place are narrated in the chapter on the life of Jeanne d'Albret. It is sufficient here to say that on the arrival of Renée at Orleans the Guises had lately revenged the conspiracy of Amboise by the slaughter of twelve hundred victims,

that Louis of Bourbon, Prince of Condé, was lying in prison under sentence of death, and that Antony of Navarre was in hourly danger of assassination.

Renée's relations with the contending factions which divided the French court were peculiar. Francis, Duke of Guise, was her son-in-law; but she was bound by the convictions of a lifetime to the Huguenot party and by ties of friendship to Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, and to the Coligny brothers, Gaspard Coligny, Admiral of France, Francis d'Andelot, and Odet, the Cardinal. In Andelot she must have taken a special interest, because it was through reading the books she had lent him during his imprisonment at Milan from 1551-6 that he had become a Protestant. Francis had in his turn converted his brother Gaspard. He likewise had turned a period of imprisonment, after the battle of St. Quentin, to good account, reading the Bible and other books sent to him by his brother Francis d'Andelot. As his latest biographer has said, "imprisonment gave him a chance to think."*

Francis d'Andelot Coligny had suffered from Henry II. a similar indignity to that inflicted upon Renée by her husband. The proud, strong man, no less than the delicate, deformed woman, had after imprisonment, bought liberty by a promise to attend mass. The Colignys, especially the Admiral, were

* "Gaspard de Coligny, Admiral of France," by A. W. Whitehead. (Methuen and Co.)

the strongest and best characters among the French noblemen who joined the Huguenot cause. If there had been among them a larger number of men of equal fibre the whole issue would have been very different. The Reformation in France was too much based on party rancour, and too little on genuine religious conviction. Its roots did not go sufficiently deep into what is strongest in human character to give it a firm and permanent hold on the soil. The Colignys were Huguenots from genuine religious conviction, but with many of the other leaders, on both sides, it seems a mere accident with which of the contending parties they would ally themselves. The Duke of Guise, for instance, had no fixed and unalterable objection to the principles of the Reformation, or he would hardly have married Renée's daughter; he was forced, as it were, into the front rank of its opponents by the hostility of his house to the houses of Bourbon and Châtillon, the first represented by Antony of Navarre and Condé, the second by the brothers Coligny.

Anna d'Este, Duchess of Guise, had in the early years of her life something more than a feeling of toleration for the Huguenots. After the discovery of the conspiracy of Amboise, when the awful cruelties which avenged it were being carried out, we are told that many of "the executions were reserved until after dinner, contrary to custom. . . to afford some pastime for the

ladies." On the occasion of one of these terrible spectacles Anna d'Este, bathed in tears, rushed from the balcony from which she had just witnessed the butchery of the aged Baron of Castelnau, and flew to the apartments of the Queen Mother, who coolly demanded "what was the matter?" The Duchess replied that she had all the occasion in the world for her grief, that she had just witnessed the most piteous tragedy and strange cruelty, and that she doubted not that the punishment of God must follow on such inhumanity.* The frightful cruelty with which the conspiracy of Amboise was revenged made even the Chancellor, who had given his consent to the executions, exclaim to the Cardinal Guise, "O Cardinal! you will ruin the souls of us all." It was this pouring out of the best blood of France like water for which the Guises were responsible; and the terror they had awakened had no small share in producing their downfall. No one felt safe as long as such tigers were predominant in the council chamber of the King. The tension in Orleans was tremendous.. The town was filled with troops. The population had been disarmed. There was scarcely a knife left for table use.† This was the court with which Renée had now cast in her lot. She was

* Did this story suggest to Shakespeare the remark of Touchstone in the first Act of *As You Like It*: "It is the first time that I ever heard breaking of ribs was sport for ladies"?

† "Life of Coligny" by Whitehead, p. 90.

received with all honour by the French king and his brothers, the King of Navarre, and all the great personages of the court. The event of her arrival was notified to Queen Elizabeth of England by her ambassador, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton.

On learning the condition of affairs, and especially the peril in which Condé then was, the Duchess Renée remonstrated very earnestly with her son-in-law, the Duke of Guise, and declared that if she had arrived while Condé was still at liberty she would have prevented his imprisonment. As a royal princess she insisted on what she thought the peculiar iniquity of doing violence to princes of the blood. "Such wounds," she said, "bleed long, and it had never ended well with anyone who had been first in the assault upon chiefs of royal blood." * The Constable did not come to Condé's rescue, but Admiral Coligny hurried to Orleans. He knew his danger, but said he committed the event to God. Henceforward, till his murder on St. Bartholomew's day twelve years later, he was the recognised chief of the Huguenot party.

But neither the prayers of Renée nor the threats of Coligny availed. The Guises were all powerful, and they intended that Condé should die. But a stronger power than they could contradict thwarted their intents. The death of Francis II. on December 5th changed the whole aspect of affairs. The

* De Thou. Quoted in "Memorials of Renée of France," p. 181.



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ELIZABETH, QUEEN OF ENGLAND.

FROM A RECENTLY DISCOVERED PORTRAIT AT SIENA.

power of the Guises fell like a house of cards; Catherine de Medici became Regent, and during the next few months nearly all signs pointed to the probable triumph of the Huguenot cause throughout France.

We can only follow these events here in so far as they are connected with the Duchess Renée. She used the opportunity of the presence of the English ambassador in the court at Orleans to put herself in direct communication with Queen Elizabeth. Sir Nicholas Throckmorton acquaints his mistress with the results of his conference with Renée in a long despatch, dated Orleans, January 10th, 1560-(61).

"The old Dutchesse of Farare (off whose aryvall at thys courte I did advertyse your Mat^{tie} before thys tyme) did send one off hyr syrvaunts unto me with goode words of vysytation: who desyryd me on hyr behalffe to take the payns to come and vysyte hyr at hyr lodgyngs unto whom she then (as the messenger sayd) wold declare more off hyr mind."

The ambassador accordingly waited on "the old Dutchesse of Farare" on January 6th. Renée was only fifty years old, but at this time Elizabeth was not much more than twenty-seven, and twenty-seven may well look upon fifty as well advanced into the vale of years. Renée expressed to Throckmorton the reverence, love, and honour she felt for the Queen of England. She congratulated Elizabeth on having won the love and obedience of her subjects,

on her good success against her enemies, and that which none of her ancestors could ever bring to pass, "the amytie of the realm of Scotland." This prosperity, Renée continued, according to the ambassador, had caused many people,

"yea those that be not of hyr relygion to be perswaded that the Lord doth sustayne hyr and prosper hyr proceedyngs, and theyreby are more inclynyd to give eare to the treuthe."

The Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici, Renée was persuaded, was one of these :

"beyng a virtuos and sage lady, she dothe begynn to herkynne to the trewth 'which,' sayd she, 'wold in my oppinion, take better effect yff the quene your Mrs would use some perswasions either by wryting or otherwyse unto hyr. You will not believe,' sayd she, 'the goode towardnes that ys in the Kyng for his age, and yt were grett pytie that he should not be instructed in the treuthe, seyng so good a dyspocition and so grett a spryte be mette in hym together.'"

She urged Sir Nicholas also to use his good offices in persuading the Queen Mother of the "trewth," because there was no means so certain of producing a perfect and assured amity between France and England as an amity in religion. Sir Nicholas deftly excused himself from undertaking the task of converting Catherine.

"I dyd take myselffe not to be a fytt instrument to have to do in that matter. But rather thowgthe that she (beyng the kyng's nere kynswoman and in credytte with the quene mother and all other

grett personagis of thys realme, the duke of Guys havynge here in this courte a grett authoritye being hyr son yn law) was in my opinyon a most convenyent meyne to worke in this matter."

With one more homely touch the letter concludes :

"Then she sayd 'besyds these respects that dothe move me to love and honor the quene, your Mrs, whearoff I have alredy spokyne to you, theyre is another cause wyche, though yt be off less wheight, dothe worke yn me a parciall goode wyll towards hyr. There was an old acquayntance betwyxte the quene hyr mother and me when she was on off my sister quene Claude's mayds of honor.' I did tell the duchesse that I would not forgett to advertysse your Mat^{tie} of all that she sayd unto me. And so after a few obsequious words I toke my leave off her. While the duchesse of Farare and I talked together, the duchesse of Guise her dawghter came ynto the chamber."

Renée would probably remember as she sent this message to Queen Elizabeth about her mother, the embassy of Cardinal Wolsey to Paris, before the marriage of Henry VIII. to Anne Boleyn; his mission being to propose the marriage of his master, first to Margaret of Angoulême, and failing that to Renée herself. It may well have reached Renée's ears that a kindly reference to "the quene hyr mother" would smooth the way to Elizabeth's favour. Professor Beesly, in his monograph on Elizabeth, says that she placed great reliance on the courage and fidelity of her kinsmen on the Boleyn side. When she was dying the one person to whom

she seemed to cling with trust and affection was Lord Nottingham, the Admiral, a second cousin of Anne Boleyn.*

Apart from the humorous and personal touches in the foregoing letter the most interesting part of it is that which shows the hopes then entertained by the Huguenots of winning over the Queen Mother to their side. In 1561 Renée did not know that "vertuos and sage lady" as well as she learned to know her later. Catherine treated her husband's aunt with courtesy and allotted her a distinguished place in the ceremonies of state. The two ladies were further drawn together by their common interest in astrology. Catherine constantly tried to read the future in the stars, and often discoursed on the subject with Renée, whose proficiency in it she warmly extolled.

Not long after the court left Orleans the Duchess Renée was installed in the castle of Montargis, and it became her home henceforth till her death. The castle had been a favourite royal residence before the building of Fontainebleau, and had acquired the name of "Le Berceau des Enfants de la France." It was very large, capable of accommodating a garrison of 6,000 men. The Duchess was made Governor of both castle and town, and was known in the district as "La Dame de Montargis." During

* "Queen Elizabeth" by E. S. Beesly, p. 236. Twelve English Statesmen series. Macmillan and Co.

her occupation of the castle she constantly converted it into a harbour of refuge for persecuted Huguenots. By hundreds at a time she sheltered and relieved them. For a short time, indeed, it seemed that the Huguenots would have no need of protection, the colloquy of Poissy and the edict of January, 1562, recognising the legality of protestant worship outside the walls of towns, seemed to promise that a period of religious liberty was assured. But the massacre of Vassy, which followed within forty days of the promulgation of the edict, showed that it was not worth the paper on which it was written. In February, 1562, a congregation of Huguenots numbering about eight or nine hundred assembled for worship in a barn outside the little town of Vassy. The sound of their bell unfortunately attracted the attention of the Duke of Guise, who was in the neighbourhood. He and his armed escort surrounded the barn and shot down the assembled congregation unarmed as they were. Sixty-four were killed on the spot, and more than two hundred grievously wounded.

The outbreak of the first of the long series of civil wars was the direct consequence of this treacherous outrage. Theodore Bèza, as leader of the French Protestant Church, demanded vengeance of Catherine and of Antony of Navarre, who was then associated with her in the regency. Receiving no answer but mocking and contemptuous words from

Antony, Béza retorted, "Sire, it is, I confess, for the Church of God, in whose name I speak, to endure blows and not to give them. But may it please you remember it is an anvil which has worn out many hammers."

When news of the massacre reached Renée, she caused the gates of Montargis to be closed so that no one, whether Catholic or Huguenot, could pass in or out. She was confronted by those within the town who sympathised with the party of the Duke of Guise and applauded the cruel massacre which had just taken place at his instigation. A plot was on foot to repeat at Montargis the example given at Vassy. But Renée's energy and determination frustrated the scheme. She had but very few soldiers at her disposal, and she sent in all haste to Prince Louis of Bourbon (Condé) for a detachment of horse and foot. On their arrival the heads of the plot were tried, three were hanged, some were imprisoned, and all their followers were disarmed. The Duchess's promptitude and vigour showed that she was determined to make her authority respected, and that she would leave nothing undone to preserve law and order in the town of which she was the governor.

The first civil war had now begun. As a princess of the blood royal of France Renée had no sympathy with those who were in arms against their sovereign, but she made Montargis a place where

peaceful people, whether protestant or catholic, could carry on peaceful pursuits in peace. They could worship God, each in the way his conscience preferred, safe from violent molestation. Béza says that whilst all was war and tumult outside, perfect security reigned inside Montargis, and it became a place of refuge for Huguenots from Paris, Melun, Nemours, Louis, Sens, Blois, and Tours; many also of the Roman religion sought the peace there which they looked for in vain elsewhere.

When Condé's soldiers were withdrawn, the Duchess raised a small band of her own to guard the walls and gates of her town and castle. But this period of tranquillity was not destined to be of long duration. The royal army, under the command of the Duke of Guise, having accomplished the capitulation of Bourges by the end of August, marched on to occupy Montargis. The Duchess was greatly perturbed. She counselled the Huguenot ministers to withdraw to a castle in the neighbourhood whose owner could be relied on to shelter them, and then she gathered all the hundreds of poor Huguenots in the town within the protecting walls of her own castle, so that it resembled a hospital rather than a royal residence.

The first to arrive were the Duchess of Guise, Renée's daughter, accompanied by her brother-in-law, the Cardinal. Then came the young King, Charles IX., and his suite, and later Renée's greatly

dreaded son-in-law, the Duke of Guise. Anna, Duchess of Guise, had done her best to allay her mother's fears and anxieties. Charles IX. "caressed much the lady his aunt, kissing her several times, and shedding tears." The formidable Duke, when he arrived, permitted his soldiers to wreck the protestant place of worship and to re-erect the statues and altars which had been cast down in the Roman churches. The seditious part of the population, some of whom had been banished under Renée's orders, now returned, and the whole place was on the brink of a violent outbreak of fanaticism and disorder. Renée, however, obtained a proclamation from the king ordering, under penalty of death, that no one should be interfered with in the practice of either religion. The Duke of Guise went on to the siege of Orleans, but before he left he deprived Renée of the governorship of Montargis. While at Orleans he went further in his hostile measures against her, and gave orders in the King's name that she should leave Montargis, "that nest of Huguenots," and live either at Fontainebleau, St. Germain, or Vincennes. He not only gave the order, but sent four companies of horse, under the command of Sieur de Malicorne, to see that it was carried out. Renée offered a courageous and stubborn resistance. She warmly asserted her own loyalty and that of every person in her castle. She maintained that in France she was subject to no one but

the King. When Malicorne threatened to bring a storming party to make a breach in her walls with battering rams, she said she would place herself upon the battlements so that she would be the first to be slain, and added that "she had no lack of friends and relatives who would avenge with spirit any injury done to herself." Malicorne had not expected this spirited reception from the "olde Dutchesse of Farare," and while he was hesitating what next to do, the news came, February, 1563, of the assassination of the Duke of Guise at Orleans, by Poltrot, a Huguenot. After this Béza writes of Malicorne that "he wanted not the will to do mischief, but that "it was with him as with organs that lack blowing." His active career of mischief was suspended, and the Duchess Renée was left in undisturbed possession of her castle.

The murder of the Duke had miserable consequences on the cause of Protestantism in France. Not only did a suspicion of complicity attach to the great name of Coligny, but it awakened in the Duchess of Guise and in her son an insatiable desire for vengeance. Anna d'Este had been to some extent, during her husband's life, a moderating influence. Her brother-in-law the cardinal had said roundly that he knew his sister-in-law was a Protestant; this probably meant no more than that she had exhibited some pity and compassion for the sufferings of Protestants; but after her husband's

murder she was a changed woman. Her one thought was to avenge his death. The cruelty from which she had formerly shrunk now became, she believed, her duty. Her young son Henry, Duke of Guise, she brought up with the idea that he was no true son unless he dipped his hand into the blood of the murderers of his father. The Catholic opinion of the time judged Coligny to be guilty; and the hideous and revolting attack of the young Duke upon the aged and wounded Coligny on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572, and the barbarous outrages on the corpse, were doubtless excused in his own eyes because they were perpetrated as revenge for his father's death.

The Duchess of Guise became the leader of the Roman Catholic ladies in the court. Her influence was now always used to encourage greater cruelty and ferocity towards the Huguenots. An undated letter from Calvin to the Duchess Renée bears internal evidence that it was written shortly after the murder of the Duke of Guise. In it Calvin beseeches Renée to exert her influence with the Duchess of Guise, that "she may be induced . . . to moderate her passions, which she can only obey as she does by fighting against God." He asserts that Renée's daughter was joining herself with those who were plotting "to exterminate all Christianity out of the world." Calvin had consistently opposed all acts of violence and bloodshed; this gave him a

strong moral position in attempting to check their consequences. In particular he had reprobated any murderous attempt on the life of the Duke of Guise. "It was entirely owing to me," he wrote, "that men of daring courage had not tried to rid the world of him. They were held back solely by my exhortations." But, however free from blame himself, his party had to reap the bitter harvest arising from the violence and treachery of some of its members. "What's done cannot be undone" by all the sorrows and tears in the world. Of course the Huguenots had had hideous provocation; but they were standing for purer morals and a more spiritual religion, and when they descended to treacherous murder and to brutal and irreverent desecration of altars, tombs, and the symbols of Catholic worship, they fell from a greater height than when Roman Catholics did similar things.

Renée stands absolutely blameless in the matter of the murder of the Duke of Guise. His death relieved her from a dangerous and difficult position, but she never condoned or excused it, and consequently had to endure coldness and even bitter words and false accusations from those enthusiastic Huguenots who believed they could promote good by doing evil. There is a long and terribly involved letter from Renée to Calvin on the whole matter of the murder of the Duke and similar acts of violence. In this letter she more or less defends the Duke,

saying that she knew he had protected the property of Coligny from confiscation and his castle from sack and pillage, and in other ways had shown humanity superior to that of the bulk of his party. She urges that even now, when he was dead, his enemies pursued his memory with falsehood and slander.

"I must tell you," she naïvely says, "that I neither hold nor consider [it possible] that such falsehoods proceed from God. I know that he did persecute, but I do not know, neither do I believe, to express myself freely to you, that he was a reprobate by Divine judgment. For he gave signs to the contrary before he died. Only people do not choose that it should be spoken of, and there is a wish to shut and lock up the mouths of those who know it. As for myself, I know that I have been hated and held in abomination by many persons because he was my son-in-law, on whom they wished to lay the faults of all."

She reprobates the idea that the cause of God can be served by acts of the devil. She states that Jeanne D'Albret, Queen of Navarre, had in conversation maintained a contrary view and had said that in defence of the reformed religion all weapons, even falsehood, were allowable.*

"Which view," continues the Duchess Renée, "I could not but resist saying that God is not the father of lies, but that it is the devil who is so; and that God is the God of truth, and that His word is powerful enough to defend his own people, without our taking up the arms

* One would like to have heard Queen Jeanne's account of this conversation before forming a judgment on her part in it. Renée's report is not consistent with Jeanne's general character.

of the devil and of his children. . . . M. Calvin, I am sorry you do not know how half the world conducts itself in this kingdom nor the habits of . . . ill-will which prevail in it even to the exhorting of simple young women to say that they should like to kill and strangle with their own hands. That is not the rule which Jesus Christ and His Apostles have given us: and I say it with all the great regret of my heart on account of the affection which I feel to the religion and to those who bear its title."

A modern soldier has described war as "hell let loose." How much the civil wars of religion in the sixteenth century deserved such a description, this letter of Renée's vividly brings before us.

In 1565 the wife and mother of the murdered Duke of Guise, attended by veiled women, all dressed in the deepest mourning, and uttering cries and groans, had flung themselves at the feet of Charles IX. demanding "justice" upon the murderers. The torture and final execution of Poltrot had not sated their desire for vengeance; they were aiming at Coligny. However, an apparent reconciliation took place in 1566 at Moulins. Coligny then positively swore that he was neither the author of the murder nor a consenting party to it. The council declared him innocent. Whereupon, by command of the King, a formal reconciliation took place; the widow, Anna d'Este, and Cardinal Guise embraced Admiral Coligny, and promised no longer to bear malice in their hearts

against him. It is to be noted, however, that the young Henry, Duke of Guise, took no part in this reconciliation, and refused to acknowledge the verdict of the council. The marriage shortly after this between the widowed Duchess of Guise and Jacques of Savoy, Duke of Nemours, confirmed her close future identification with the most vehement section of the anti-Huguenot party. The Duke of Nemours had been pledged to marry Françoise de Rohan, a protestant and a near relative of Queen Jeanne of Navarre. He threw her over and obtained a papal dispensation, freeing him from the obligations into which he had entered with her. This was to enable him to marry the Duchess of Guise. Renée was not present at her daughter's second marriage, and there is no record of her opinion upon it. It deeply offended Queen Jeanne, who left the court and endeavoured to extend protection and friendship to the forsaken Mademoiselle de Rohan.

But little remains to be told of the life of the Duchesse Renée. She continued in fairly frequent correspondence with Calvin till his death at Geneva in May, 1564. Her position towards the reformed church is marked by Béza's dedication to her of his edition of Calvin's shorter works, and his prefatory letter addressed to the "très illustre, et très haute Princesse, Ma Dame, Renée de France, Duchesse de Ferrare et de Chartres."

France, now and for many years after Renée's

death, was engulfed under the desolating waves of civil war. During what remained to her of life, she could do little beyond expressing her sympathy with the reformed churches of Europe, and opening the hospitable and protecting castle at Montargis to refugees who were suffering for "the religion." A cruel massacre of Huguenots at Orleans in 1569 caused a great flight thence, especially of women and children, to Renée's sheltering care. She proved herself a guardian angel to 460 of these poor creatures. It was her last remaining pleasure to succour and defend them. Through the evil offices of those who had the ear of the King in Paris, she was ordered by her sovereign to turn her poor pensioners away. She pleaded that she was too nearly related to the crown to be ill-affected towards it; that the poor people within her walls were quite harmless, meddling with nothing which could be injurious to the welfare of the King or of the State. But nothing she said produced any effect, and the usually gentle Renée burst into tears of rage, saying to the messenger, "If I had on my chin what you have on yours, I could kill you with my own hands."

Bitterly grieved as she was, she did not let her fugitives go empty away. She provided them with 150 waggons, eight travelling coaches, and the necessary number of horses and drivers. The feelings of the refugees on leaving her may well be imagined. They fully believed that they would be

overtaken and massacred; and at one moment in their flight they all thought their hour had come; a troop of 200 armed horsemen was sent out by the Catholic party to waylay and kill them; the ministers who acted as scouts perceived the approach of this murderous band and were in the very act of exhorting their poor pilgrims to die with courage, when suddenly a rescue party of 800 Huguenot soldiers appeared, who escorted Renée's fugitives in safety to La Charité. No doubt it was not long before they contrived to let Renée hear of their marvellous escape and new harbour of refuge.

A temporary peace was proclaimed in 1570. Some important concessions were made to the Huguenots. They were allowed liberty of worship in all the towns then in their possession, and besides this in the suburbs of two towns in each of the provinces of France; they were likewise granted an amnesty for past offences, a right to admission to public office, and permission to reside where they would. Four towns, La Rochelle, La Charité, Cognac, and Montauban, were to be held by Huguenot troops for two years as sureties for the carrying out of the foregoing conditions. This peace was called "*la paix boiteuse et malassise*," because of its two chief negotiators—one, Biron, was lame, and the other bore the name of Malassise.

A Huguenot synod was called at La Rochelle in the following year, whence Coligny was summoned

to Blois, and later to Paris, by the young King, and the events were put in train which culminated in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

In the meantime, Duchess Renée had much trouble with the French court about the payment of the dowry which had been settled on her at the time of her marriage. Chartres, which had been assigned to her with a revenue of 1,100 livres, she declared cost her each year a much larger sum. Gisors and Vernon had been made over to another claimant. An attempt had been made to charge on Renée's estates the repayment of the debts of her late father, who had died some fifty years earlier. "My daughter, De Nemours," as Renée called her in a long explanatory letter to her son, the Duke of Ferrara, had exerted herself with much care and diligence to recover the title deeds and papers which would make good her mother's claim to the lands and money settled on her at her marriage. Renée entreats Alfonso not to be dissatisfied with what she is surrendering out of her property to the Duchess of Nemours, and reminds him that the terms which had been granted to her were due to the favour his sister enjoyed at the court, and also to her great personal exertions. The Duchess of Nemours seems to have had a very good eye to the main chance, but she never broke with her mother or neglected her. The rest of Renée's life was spent at Montargis. She was safe in her castle

when the tornado of St. Bartholomew broke over Paris; but her daughter and son-in-law and grandson had a large share of the blood-guiltiness of that awful crime. Seventeen days after August 24th, 1572, the Duchess of Nemours wrote to her mother from Paris a letter in which she observes that, "Here things seem to be very peaceable, and no murder is committed nor act of offence that I have heard of continued to be done to any person." She adds that the King was having lists made of the names, titles, and residences of all who were of "the religion," with prohibition to injure or slander them. This was as if Herod had opened an infant school after the massacre of the innocents. The Duchess, continuing her letter, said, "Madame, with regard to my health, it appears to me that for three nights past I have had better rest than I have been accustomed to, which has brought me much amendment."

It was not many years after this that those wonderful words were written:—

"Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more."

The perpetual iteration in Macbeth that sleep could not visit with its consoling, refreshing power, the eyes that had gloated on the shedding of innocent blood, seems almost foreshadowed in the cold, formal words of Anna d'Este's letter. Poor woman, she

was destined to drink to the dregs the bitter cup which she had pressed so callously upon others. In 1588 her two sons were murdered at Blois by the order of Henry III., and she herself was brought to the castle as a prisoner. It is said that her thoughts then went back to her mother, and that she exclaimed, "O mother! when your father built these walls, you did not expect that my children would have been hacked to pieces therein."

The Duchess Renée died within less than three years after the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The date of her death was June 12th, 1575. She was only sixty-five; but she had never been a strong woman, and the wars, tumults, and massacres which darkened her later years made her an old woman before her time. She was buried in the church belonging to the castle at Montargis, her tomb bearing the simple inscription, with no reference to Ferrara:—

"Renée de France, Duchesse de Chartres, Comtesse de Gisors et Dame de Montargis."

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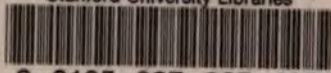
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